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# H E L P S

TO THE

## PROMOTION OF REVIVALS.

By REV. J. V. WATSON, D. D.,

EDITOR OF THE NORTHWESTERN CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE.

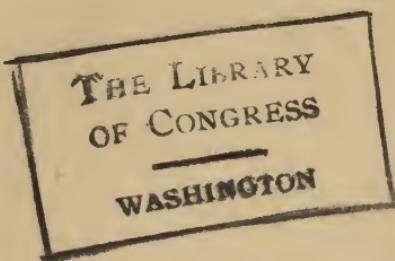


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## P R E F A C E.

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As our title implies, the subject-matter of this volume is treated rather *suggestively* than *exhaustively*. We have aimed to set forth principles, and left their details and applications to the reader. Indeed, it is too late to teach Methodist preachers how to conduct revivals, but not too late to help one another by our suggestions to bring about this most blessed condition of the Church in which it can exist out of heaven.

Much of the matter of this volume has already appeared in the columns of the paper under the author's control. But for the flattering attention which it has there excited, we might never have thought of giving it its present form. Numerous letters from highly respectable sources have reached us at different times, soliciting its publication in a less ephemeral form than that of a newspaper. Yielding to the judgment of our friends, we hope the volume

will do good. We the more readily make a book upon this subject because, so far as we are aware, the catalogue literature of Methodism is unsupplied with such a work. Albeit we would not forget to mention the most excellent little work of Rev. James Porter, D. D., which has had a steady sale for several years.

The work has been prepared under disadvantages altogether peculiar, and which none but the author can duly appreciate. Should the critic here seek work, he would be apt to find enough to do. We hold ourself responsible not for its verbal accuracy, but for its doctrines alone. If it have merit, as we flatter ourselves it has, it will make its way in the world. If it have not, it does not deserve to.

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# HELPS TO THE PROMOTION OF REVIVALS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### WHAT IS A REVIVAL?

THE CHURCH IN NEED OF REVIVALS — A REVIVAL NOT A MIRACLE — REVIVALS THE RESULT OF THE USE OF APPROPRIATE MEANS — THE PLACE WHERE REVIVALS MUST BEGIN — PRIVATE PRAYER AND PERSONAL EFFORT — THE WORKING OF THE SOCIAL PRINCIPLE.

LIKE the land of Israel in the days of Elijah, the Churches are withering away for the want of a revival shower. The exceptions are rare. All acknowledge these facts with regret, and look out and abroad for relief, whether they commence to work *at home* to secure it or not. This delineation is true at this writing. We hope it may not be, dear reader, when it falls into your hands.

What is a revival, and how can we, how

must we, labor to promote it? A revival is not a miracle. Things marvelous in our eyes may often occur in a revival, but miracles are not now wrought in them. A miracle is the setting aside or suspension of some law of nature, to show that God is above nature, to prove his presence, and for the establishment of some revelation which he is about to make. But God has made all the revelation to man that he will ever make, and the mission of miracles has ceased. God has revealed himself, and accompanied the revelation by miraculous demonstration. He would now show that he is the author of nature and her laws, by always acting in accordance with the requirements of the latter, and thus evincing his approval of them. We are not to look, then, for miracles in revivals. They are the result of natural causes, the fruit of the use of appropriate means, and the certainty or probability of their occurrence must be judged of by considering the means used, the wisdom employed in the use of these means, and the opposition to be overcome.

A revival consists of a greatly increased interest on the subject of religion on the part of believers; in which they are blessedly conscious of an increase of love to God, faith in his truth,

a growth in all the graces of the Spirit, and a deep solicitude for the salvation of sinners. In this spiritual condition, believers are ready in word, and in spirit, and by action, to exert themselves to bring souls to the cross. The Church, made up of such believers, becomes a quickened mass of spiritual life, and the very atmosphere becomes electrical with spiritual influences. The social principle is brought into action, and man becomes a missionary to his fellow, neighbor, child, or kinsman, under circumstances of very great advantage, the Holy Ghost being present, to impart power from on high, just in proportion to our faith and effort. Led by the faithful pastor, as an army by its general, this squadron of live Christians are going forth into the highways and hedges, and "compelling them to come in." O, what a lovely sight is this, one over which the angels in heaven swell higher the notes of gladness, and bend from their celestial stations to gratulate men on earth. How often has our poor heart dilated over scenes like these, and how sweet still their memory! When will these days of refreshing again revisit the whole Church—days when saints were thrilled with unearthly joy and transport, and sinners, willing and weeping, came trembling to the altar, with

the inquiry on their lips, uttered in fragments, by reason of their deep, heart-swelling sobs, “What must I do to be saved?” “O Lord, revive thy work.” The right place for a revival to commence, then, is in the Church—in the hearts of believers.

But what means are to be employed? And here we would insist upon the importance of considering revivals as the result of the use of the appropriate means, so far as man is concerned. If we consider them as miracles—as occurring arbitrarily—as being confined to particular seasons of the year, we are in great danger of losing sight of our responsibility in the case; of *waiting* for a revival instead of *working* for it. The Holy Ghost is always equally ready, but man, though always equally needy, is not always equally ready. Would we have a revival? then, the first thing to be done is not to look to others—not to wait the coming of some famous revivalist—not to look out of ourselves, but into our own hearts, and then up to heaven. What is our own condition as it respects our personal piety and holiness? What is the condition of our spiritual emotions? Are we merely formal in duty and moral in practice, and have we come to conclude that pure and undefiled religion be-

fore God consists in this? What are our spiritual tastes? Do we linger as upon the banks of the pure river of the waters of life, clear as crystal, over the inspired page, and hear the whispers of the Spirit, and feel his refreshing presence like the fragrance of the flower, in the word of the Lord, which endureth forever! Do we, betimes, love retirement, and seek the closet for uninterrupted communion with our heavenly Father, that he may reward us openly? Without private prayer, personal religion loses its vitality, and ceases to be a constant and abiding joy to its possessor—a well of water within the heart, springing up into everlasting life. O, this is the place to begin! What would be the result of the re-erection of the four hundred thousand fallen closet-altars in the Methodist Episcopal Church? We verily believe that no religious duty equaling it in importance is so frequently and generally neglected as that of secret prayer. Hence, the spiritual life of many is like a wet-weather spring, when it ought to be perennial, a living spring.

There is an individualism in the spiritual life that must be commenced and be continued by an habitually secret intercourse with God. This fact is exemplified in the

lives of all good men, both inspired and uninspired. In holy intercourse with God, in heavenly vision, patriarchs, prophets, and apostles have always commenced their eventful careers. "From the closet to the Church, from our knees to the pulpit," were the mottoes of the reformers; and every revival minister since their days knows that here is the hiding of his power, the beginning of his strength.

The Church, then, would she have a revival, must potentialize herself by an individual resort to the holiest altar of the cathedral, the one that shuts out alike the gaze of man, the interruption of the world, and leaves the worshiper alone with his God, like Jacob at Bethel, at the hour of midnight. "Give me Scotland, or I die!" "Give me souls, or take *my* soul!" were the overheard closet supplications of John Knox and the rapt Whitefield. O, for this fervor of the hidden life, that takes the kingdom of heaven by force; the absence of this is the generic cause of the absence of revivals, and the prevalence of dearth and spiritual languor. It was while Cornelius fasted and prayed, that a man—an angel, Jesus Christ—"stood before him in bright clothing," and instructed him in the way of life

everlasting. The example of Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, is still a model for the whole Church. Among professors, the sins of omission are greater than those of commission, and of the first named the greatest of all is that of restraining prayer before God.

Beginning with the right duty in the right place, family, social, and public prayer, attended with a greatly quickened faith, and an increased love for all the services and ordinances of the sanctuary, will be the result naturally, as flows the stream when the fountain is opened. A revival is the result of a union of effort on the part of spiritually intensified individuals. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." It must commence with the individual, and work socially; commence within, and work outwardly; commence in the Church, and especially with the ministry of the Church. "And there shall be like people, like priest." It must be commenced with the grace we have, and not wait for grace to commence it. "Unto him that hath shall be given." The Holy Ghost is always willing and waiting to shed on the Church the spirit of revival! "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good things to your children, how

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much more shall your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" If a Church be destitute of a revival, whose fault is it? Let every Christian and every Christian pastor start the searching inquiry, "Is it I?" "Lord, is it I?"

## CHAPTER II.

## HINDERANCES TO REVIVALS.

WANT OF FAITH — A REVIVAL FAITH DEFINED — THE GOSPEL'S CROWNING GIFT — THE MORAL MIGHT OF THE OLD REFORMERS — THE OFFICIAL CHRISTIAN — THE DIPLOMATIC CHRISTIAN — THE PARTISAN CHRISTIAN.

FIRST we will mention the absence of a pure, simple, and vigorous faith, on the part of Christians. By a pure faith, we mean that which troubles not itself with rationalizing or philosophizing; that which rises above syllogisms; that which stops not to reason on questions eternally settled, but takes God at his word; that which believes his promises, interpreted upon the most literal principle, so that they accord with the analogy of Scripture, and the evidence of the senses. It is not the faith of transcendentalism, which affects to understand itself, and deceives itself, by conceit, into a belief that it does; nor of German rationalism, which affects to believe nothing that it cannot demonstrate; nor the faith of the Romanist, which pollutes itself by believing what is not

required, and omitting what is; nor is it the faith of ignorance, which substitutes for a confiding conception of the great truths of Christianity, a mere spasmodic and evanescent fervor. By a simple faith, we mean that which refuses to parley with obstacles, like Abraham when required to offer up Isaac; a faith that does not disdain means because they are seemingly simple, but which goes and washes in the River Jordan, like the leper in the days of the prophet, no matter how loathsome the disease; a faith, whose motto is, With God all things are possible to them that believe. By a vigorous faith, we mean that which embraces the heart as well as the mind; the affections, as well as the enlightened judgment. Perfect faith is perfect love and perfect confidence acting in submissive harmony. This is faith of that vigorous type that secures a personal salvation with the evidence of it in the witness of the Spirit, and which makes affliction delight, infirmity and tribulation glory, and duty a relief. But O, how rare this faith! how prevalent unbelief! And, in view of the absence of revivals, one almost fancies he literally hears again the language, "Christ could do no mighty work there, because of their unbelief."

Brethren of the pulpit and the pews, let the prayer ascend: Lord, we believe, but help thou our unbelief! Yes, here is just the point, the gist, the canker at the heart and the lungs of a consumptive Church. We believe, but we have not faith; or, if it be liked better, we have faith, but not enough of it. We believe in the Bible historically, conform to its worship formally, and practice its morality prudentially. But the legalist and the moralist, the followers of Moses and Epictetus, are but the meager skeleton samples of Christians; they are but the bones in the vision, which have just stood up, it is true, but the flesh and sinews have not come upon them; they are not the temples of the Holy Ghost. The crowning gift of the Gospel is the gift of the Holy Ghost; and he that hath not this gift is destitute of power from on high—a dead-head—a negative pole in the communion of saints. Like the foolish virgins in the parable, his lamp, though it may once have been lit, has gone out; or, like the branch which abideth not in the vine, it is withering away, though it may yet hang pendent from its parent stem. When will Christians learn that the life and vitality of religion consist in an experimental consciousness of a spiritual union with God, through

our Lord Jesus Christ? The restoration of this life-imparting and life-intensifying union, is the first form and foundation of everything that is worth calling a revival. In reading the lives of the saints, whether sacred or profane—those saints, we mean, who were moral giants, and shook the earth with their tread and the heavens with their prayers, though constantly exclaiming, “of ourselves we can do nothing”—we find them preëminently distinguished for this simple, pure, and vigorous faith. They consecrated themselves to God in its hallowed flame, with rapturous resolves and alacrity, though the flames of martyrdom curled over the pathway of duty, or the clanking chains of dungeons commingled with the prayers of their persecutors; for no such persecutors as confronted many of them are permitted to confront Christians now. What, with such obstacles removed out of the way, would such types of the Christian character do for the world now, where but a tithe of those professing evangelical Christianity, thus to live up to their privileges, and take to themselves this great power of compelling the sinner to come in! The great defect of the Christian character, at this age, we apprehend, is, that of being legal, official, diplomatic, and partisan. To obey the

Discipline of the Church, and the moral law of God, with some faint resolves of intending to be more spiritual, seems to quite satisfy the consciences of some. Cursed be such opiates! Away with such chloroform of modern invention, the very mesmeric manipulations of the devil.

By an official piety, we mean that which gets along easy, whether as class-leader, local preacher, or pastor; many of the latter often seeming to think, or, rather, so acting, that the thoughts of men will not rise any higher in reference to them, than that preaching is one of the common callings of life, and an honorable means of at least a frugal livelihood. Class-leaders of such spirit parrot over the same stereotyped stories and phrases, until insipidity and monotony become the terror of the class-room, and flow out by imitation into the thinly attended, and late and irregular arriving, weekly prayer-meeting. Such pastors, too, are often found feeding, discouraging, and disgusting their flocks with stale and wormy manna; using that which has been kept over too long, rather than gather it freshly descended from heaven.

By the diplomatic Christian, or Christian minister, we mean the man whose whole soul seems to be absorbed, like Martha at Bethany,

with too much serving. There are wrongs in the Discipline, order, and policy of the Church, not here and there an obvious, colossal wrong, but wrongs, in his view, almost innumerable ; and with such, every inconsiderable defect looms up into a hydra, which must be immediately righted, cured, or the Church, like the Turkish empire, is on her last legs, and only asks decent burial. Or, another type of this diplomatic Christian character consists in immensely busying itself about the mere external manifestations of the enterprise, and the benevolence of the Church. They have no time for anything but to build academies, seminaries, and colleges ; multiply, in some form, organizations of aggressiveness—fiscal plans of relief and Church aggression ; no time, we say, for this spiritual intensification of the man personal in the Church of God ; no time to arm themselves with those elements of moral power which alone can result in the sinner's conversion. Now, we like this man of so great a zeal for the mere material and external in our Zion, but we know well that the health of the whole Church requires that his zeal have a higher origin ; that these things he ought to do, and not to leave the other undone. The great error of the

Church, in every age, has been that of having her attention diverted from the spiritual and the invisible, to the external and the visible. Like the tree that has suddenly lost its powers to drink in life from the earth through its root-lungs, and dies, though covered with fruit and foliage, assuming in its death all the fascinating and dolphin hues of our Western forests in autumn, is such a Church. We hope our readers will profit by the suggestive simile. All our works must be wrought in God, or they are but the hay, the wood, and the stubble ; at best, the precious stones. Methodism builds a church daily, but what avails this, if she has acres of church room to spare all over the land, and sinners rush to hell like flocks of shepherdless sheep rushing into the jaws of the foe, because she has not in these churches altars blazing with heaven-descended fire, to arrest their attention or summon their presence ? Catholic countries are full of churches : Paris has church room for nearly every thousand of her population, and yet she has lost her power, and deservedly so, to attract the mass to her altars. O God, make our Zion to the people of this country, what the pool of Bethesda was to the afflicted and the maimed of Jerusalem. They resorted

thither, because a messenger from heaven descended and troubled the waters.

By the partisan Christian, we mean the man of great denominational confidence, of profound respect for old-fashioned Methodism; one that is perpetually dilating on what Methodism has done; and his denominational egotism is perpetually oozing out, not only at a proper time and a proper place, and with good taste, but at all times, and on all occasions. Like the Jews in the days of the Saviour, such persons' liveliest emotions seem to be kindled up in an overweening veneration for the fathers, with an exaggerated estimate of whatever has passed in the history of our Church, accompanied with a disposition to depreciate, or look with suspicion or distrust on whatever is present. We sometimes fear that, for the interests of revivals, this character is quite sufficiently numerous. The Jews, in the zenith of their apostasy, beautified the tombs of the prophets, and yet beheaded John the Baptist, and crucified Christ. But we have only space to hold the mirror for a moment before this character, and to ask him to join with us in the common-place and yet appropriate prayer: Lord, give us all more religion! "O Lord, in the midst of *these* years, revive thy work!"

## CHAPTER III.

## HINDERANCES TO REVIVALS.

THE CHURCH NOT GENERALLY HATED—A TACIT WANT OF FAITH IN HER CLAIMS A CAUSE OF MORAL OBDURACY—SOCIAL CASTES—THE SPIRITUAL ELEMENTS WANTING IN Pervasiveness—THE MATERIALISM OF THE POPULAR MIND.

THIS chapter shall be confined to the consideration of obstructions that lie between the Church and the sinner—between the Church and the popular mind. And here we will announce a conviction, which, though most reluctant to entertain, yet are we compelled to entertain it. We live in a day when the obstacles to the spread of a spiritual and experimental Christianity are greater than they have been before in half an age. We speak more particularly of this country, though we fear that the same is true of Christendom generally. Among these obstacles is not to be ranked a growing contempt for the Church, its services and its ordinances. The Church is not despised by the world, for it is not felt by it to be particularly in the way. Men of intelligence have come to

realize the great fact of all history—that religion and worship of some sort are but the cropping out of man's strongest instincts ; and seeing that human nature was not made to do without some such things, they are not destructionists in their feelings with respect to the Church, but look upon it, upon the whole, as one of the highest and purest forms of what they realize to be necessary to human nature. They prefer all the stir that is made about religion, to no religion. Hence, for this reason, as well as for others that might be named, we often see noble examples in pecuniary contributions, and other courtly acts, involving the interests of the Church and its ministry, on the part of men whose hearts seem dead to every awakening, spiritual, and evangelical visitation ; and for such acts of benevolence and amenity, for ourselves, we feel thankful. The Church, too, is high in popular favor, from the fact that it always takes hold, in some form, of some of those cords that chain the hearts of men. In some localities it is a place of fashionable resort, the weekly rendezvous of a large representation of the social circles ; (though everybody affects to despise aristocracy and fashion, yet are they really always and ever the idol of the popular heart;) resorts

where the socially esthetic, chastened and refined by the sacred, finds a ready and free indulgence. Most men, also, still respect the Church, because some members of their family or ancestry, a pious parent or grandmother, there sought refuge and rest at the foot of her altars. No, no, the American people do not despise the Church, nor plan in the dark, filibustering expeditions against her. Their reasonings, instincts, memories, all yet bind them to the Church. Why, then, has not the Church more power over them? Why the genuine phenomena of conversion, old-fashioned conversion if you please, so rare?

Nor must we, in considering obstacles in the way of revivals, urge their necessity from any remarkable decline in *membership* on the part of any of the evangelical branches of the Church family. In particular localities such diminutions are not uncommon; but, as a whole, statistics show that every branch of the Church has continued, and does still continue to progress numerically, in wealth, and social consequence. But still, every thinker upon this subject seems fully aware, that, if there be not in the Church (and we thank God that there is not) the total absence of the spiritual element that descended

at Pentecost, there is an immense and lamentable absence of pervasiveness on the part of this element. The leaven is, indeed, hid in the meal, but the process of leavening seems feeble and slow. Like the barometer, that foretells the storm, while the golden, hazy light of the softest calm sheds beauty over the landscape, and the balmy zephyrs do not turn aside the butterfly in his flight, so every deeply-spiritual mind yet feels the pressure of the world's great necessity, and sighs with a sickening and sinking heart over the desolations of Zion. Not, indeed, over her material any more than over her numerical desolations. Such heart feels that the Church is prosperous in all her external manifestations, scarcely less than society or the commonwealth, in this age of unparalleled material prosperity. But what pious heart knows not that the strength of a Church consists not in numbers, any more than do railroads make the way to heaven shorter and easier. The strength of the Church consists not in the magnificence of her altars, any more than did its purity consist in the gorgeousness of her temple (a splendor that dimmed the luster of the sun, and smote the beholder with blindness) at the time of the crucifixion. Externals are not to be depreciated,

but the spiritual and the invisible, of which they are but the husks, are to be exalted. Not in this mountain, nor in that, but in spirit and in truth, God is to be worshiped. Why, then, we again ask, this generally pervading want of power on the part of the Church, the want of spiritual aggressiveness, the want to humble, to save, and to develop the spiritual life of the sinner? On the part of many members of the Church it would be the veriest croakery, if not slander, to say, that they are not as holy as they ever were; ay, more, their intelligence is greatly increased, their habitudes of piety matured by experience, their spirituality is of a more masculine and, therefore, effective type. Nor will it do to depreciate either the piety or talent of the pulpit; for if it be no better in these respects, it is scarcely reasonable or philosophical to suppose it to be any worse. In an age of such mighty progress, to make it an exception to all progress, would be to assume a position immensely difficult to prove. Relatively, we doubt not, the pulpit is weaker; weaker, because the obstacles to be overcome are stronger; but here we anticipate the question, which we will again ask, and then answer: Why are not conversions more frequent? Why are not mani-

festations of spiritual life, of holy living, more common ?

Is not this the answer: That while, on the part of men, respect for the Church has not been diminished, and even confidence in the great principles of Gospel morality, in the certainty with which these principles follow their tendencies, has actually been on the increase in the popular mind, there has actually been going on, at the same time, a sad reaction in another direction? Has not the public mind, in respect to Christianity, been like two counter currents ; like a suddenly-swollen river, which runs down stream on one side, and up stream on the opposite bank? What we mean is this: there is a sadly-increasing want of confidence in the popular mind in such truths as regeneration and sanctification by the Holy Spirit; pardon and purity, by faith in an atoning Saviour, accompanied by the witness of the Spirit, which Spirit is to continue to take of the things which are Christ's, and reveal them to the apprehension of the renewed mind, and constitute the atmosphere of the soul in that hidden life, that kingdom of Christ which is not of this world. Is there not an increasing skepticism to the experimental verities of the Gospel? Does not the

popular mind, everywhere, tacitly look upon the spiritual essentials of a heaven-descended evangelism, as dogmas about which it is not called to concern itself? This, we think, is that form of infidelity, the united product of many other forms, and the careful nursing of many other modern things, that constitutes the very Alp and Apennine ramparts that now lie before the Church, in her attempts to promote revivals. The fruitful causes of this colossal obstacle, and the course to be pursued in order to overcome it, may constitute the theme of future chapters. In the meantime, we close this by an exhortation to our brethren, to "strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die."

## CHAPTER IV.

### HINDERANCES TO REVIVALS.

THE PROTEAN CHARACTER OF UNBELIEF — THE VERY ELECT MAY BE DECEIVED — INFIDELITY ASSUMING TO BE AN ANGEL OF LIGHT — IT FINDS APOLOGY FROM THE CONDUCT OF CHRISTIANS — AN EXAMPLE GIVEN — THE PREVALENCE OF PERVERTED SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY FALSELY SO CALLED — MARVELOUS MATERIAL PROGRESS — MAN'S ABUSE OF BLESSINGS AND MISINTERPRETATION OF THE PURPOSES OF THEIR BESTOWMENT — THE PULPIT SHOULD ADAPT ITSELF TO THE POPULAR MIND — THE LOGICAL ELEMENT MORE PREDOMINANT THAN THE EMOTIONAL — OUR SUFFICIENCY OF GOD.

In the last chapter we mentioned, as the great obstacle in the way of the Church's access to the outsiders and sinners, the existence of popular infidelity in regard to the experimental verities, the spiritual truths of the Gospel. This type of infidelity is not outspoken, it hides itself in silence; we would that it existed in another than tacit form. Like Satan, from the time that he entered the serpent until he went into the swine of the Gadarenes, so does infidelity assume all shapes. It has as many incarnations as the Brahmin god Vishnu; like Satan, too, one of its oldest tricks is to conceal its presence. It

may be that the devil's power is greatly increased because he keeps himself invisible. The form of infidelity we are considering, also, is so subtle, that it may even deceive, and often does, its own possessor; he may not always be conscious of the vital extent to which he is a hell-exposed unbeliever; like as the odors of the fabled upas, may the dreadful conclusion which he has settled in his own mind, rest in his own consciousness, and yet, like it, its subtle virus is fatal. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye must be born of the Spirit."

Every form of infidelity has its own particular epoch, in which it flourishes best; certain social phases of the age are more or less congenial to its growth, and determine the particular type which it may assume. Infidelity, in these days, does not denounce the Bible by wholesale. Contrariwise, it professes for it a great reverence, as Judas said, "Hail, Master! and kissed him." Every form of infidelity now quotes Scripture in its support.

We come, then, to name summarily a few of the principal elements that are now in active occupancy of the popular mind, and admirably calculated, if not of necessity, by ready abuse, to foster the form of infidelity we are deplored.

We first name the sectarian polemical element. What we mean is this: the evangelical Church exists fragmentarily, and these fragments are called sects or denominations; naturally enough, then, do sectarian rivalries, contests about doctrines and dogmas, arise. And now, let us ask, and it will be quite sufficient to ask, What is the spirit, as a general thing, with which these contests are carried on? So far from it being an occasional exception, it rather amounts to the rule, that the religious controversies of the pulpit, but more especially of the press, are carried on with almost as much of the spirit of bitterness and sarcasm, though, we admit, with much improvement of diction, as are the battles of party strife in the political world. How many painful examples might here be adduced; how much is here suggested, that we have neither space nor desire to say; how sickens the heart imbued with that spirit of gentleness, meekness, love, and long-suffering, at what we have said. If the spiritual man possessed by the Christian, manifest all those moral phenomena in temper, words, etc., that are manifested by men who make no pretensions to regeneration, the former, at the same time, contending with "apostolic blows and knocks," that the

spiritual life is the very antithesis of such phenomena, what other result have we any reason, logically, to expect, than that of breeding a popular infidelity to the spiritual verities of the Gospel? As a painful example of denominational selfishness and bigotry, we record here a late current fact. Who has not read of the immortal Mills and Hall of Williams College, in Massachusetts, consecrating themselves to the work of foreign missions, then little thought of, by daily meeting for prayer by the side of a certain haystack? This fact has become of sublime historic importance. At a late commencement of Williams College it was appropriately resolved to celebrate this event by a grand catholic missionary jubilee.

The representatives of sister Churches, besides the Presbyterian, were Dr. Tyng, Episcopalian, of New-York; Dr. Wyckoff, Dutch Reformed, of the same city, and Rev. Mr. Briggs, LL.D., a Baptist. These respective denominations, together with representatives of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, all faithfully represented to the numerous audience in attendance the success of the missionary work among the heathen. But—would the reader believe it?—no allusion whatever was made, during

the interesting proceedings, to one of the largest missionary denominations of all Christendom. Methodism, taken in its several sections, is the banner missionary Church of the world. Of the thirty or more evangelical foreign missions, six were established by and belong to leading branches of the great Methodist family. About one third of all the missionaries in the foreign fields are Methodists. One half of all the Church members gathered from heathendom are under the care of Methodists; and this noble work is carried on by Methodism at an expense of about one fifth of all the missionary means raised by the entire evangelical Church. And yet, these learned professors and doctors, the acknowledged embodiment of American evangelism, could not render honor to whom honor was due. Can reading and thinking outsiders fail to observe such conduct? And what effect will such discoveries have upon their faith? The natural inference is, that human regenerated nature is about the same, after all, with human nature unsubmitted to the process. Fatal conclusion! and who is responsible for it?

There was a time when such things were less deleterious than now, though, probably, there never was a time when their prevalence was

more general. That time was, when the popular mind was less logical, and more under the control of the emotional. Ours is an age of popular thinking, because it is an age of such popular reading as never existed before. All men, now, ask a reason for things, and answer they will their own questions, if not answered for them. How sad to reflect, that this mighty increase of popular intelligence should thus, by the action of Christians, be turned against us!

We may next mention the prevalence of popular delusions—sciences, falsely so called; phrenology, mesmerism, spiritualism, etc., etc. In many of these delusions there is much truth, though perverted; and the more, the more dangerous; not that all ages have not had their delusions, and many, in the Christian Church, a hundredfold more numerous than the present, but no such means existed in those days for the general diffusion of such delusions. They were local, and therefore ephemeral. They did not take those organized forms, with their organs, oracles, and their chief of magicians, as with us. Simon Magus could not issue a newspaper, as he can do now; at the same time that the Church can work no miracle to withstand his dirty divinations. There is, too, in society, the work-

ing of an element most mischievously materializing in its tendencies. Like the postdiluvians on the beautiful and sunny plains of Shinar, mankind are ever prone to abuse God's greatest gifts to purposes of blasphemy and sacrilege. The very marvel of the daguerreotype, the steamship, the telegraph, the railroad, and the locomotive, from the transports of wonder at which mankind have not yet cooled down, has, doubtless, weakened the popular faith in the old-fashioned order of human restoration and amelioration. Indeed, it would be a serious oversight in our study of the means by which society is affected, not to look upon the discoveries of the present half century as affecting it most profoundly. Mankind is not only given to the abuse of blessings, but is perpetually misinterpreting the purpose of their bestowment. Like the children of Israel, when they were without meat, they murmured from fear of starvation. When the Lord converted the region around the camp nightly into a pigeon roost, they waxed fat and sensual, "ate and drank, and then rose up to play;" many nowadays, expatiating on the world's progress, seem to have had their heads turned, and we should scarcely be astonished to hear of their soon preaching that

men are to be regenerated by electricity, and go to heaven by steam. Nor are these effects upon the world's mind so surprising, considering the marvelousness of the cause. It was but in 1807, that Fulton launched the first steamboat. In 1825 the first railroad was put into operation. The electric telegraph was not demonstrated as feasible until 1845. Hoe's printing press is but an invention of yesterday. Gas light was unknown to the world in 1800. The beautiful discoveries of Daguerre were unknown until 1839; and while discoveries have thus been going on upon this earth, astronomy has been enlarging her borders in the heavens, and planet after planet has been discovered. The mind of the world has been shocked at its own inventions, and is intoxicated with extravagant expectations of what may be discovered in the next half century. Nothing short of a millennium without submitting to the old and trite requisition of entering in at the "strait gate," is expected. Fatal and fanatical conclusion! Depraved man will attempt to walk by sparks of his own kindling, and hew out to himself cisterns that will hold no water.

By many these are considered, without a question, as the effective agents of a social mil-

lennium near at hand. Sad and fatal mistake ! Just as apt are they to be the agents of human degeneracy and sensualism, if the old "balm of Gilead" (the vital principle of spiritual life, that connects the soul with its Maker) be overlooked in the construction of society. But still the popular belief obtains, that men are actually to be made better by steam and electricity, rather than by the Spirit of God. Deluded with the belief that society is being constantly lifted to some better state, as with the lever of Archimedes, favored with the fulcrum of modern discovery, the sinner fancies himself going up with the world, and feels willing to risk his chance.

The popular mind, too, must be considered as just passing a transition state; formerly, the emotional almost uniformly controlled the intellectual; now the intellectual controls the emotional. Not that the laws of sympathy have changed, but the intellect, dependent upon different laws and circumstances for its growth, has been placed under those circumstances that have developed its power. Not that true earnestness is any less appreciated, or less essential. Not that in the storming of the city of Mansoul, (to use a thought of that incomparable dreamer of Bedford jail,) Mr. Wet-eyes is any less needed; but

certain it is, that we have arrived at a period in which, if we are not called to give the sinner a rationale of his conversion, we are called, in a manner commensurate with his own intelligence, and the logical processes of his own mind, to give him a reason, par excellence, why he should be converted, and the Spirit or grace of God be the essential agent in the work. The ordinary fervid and dogmatic ministrations of our fore-fathers, just here, should not be looked to wholly as a model. We know not but that we may be called to fight the battle of the Christian evidences over again, with reference to this phase of unbelief. Certain it is, that men are now moved more by moving their thoughts than moving their emotions; and the former seems the Malakoff Tower, on which, first, to make the attack; while, at the same time, Methodist preachers should have all of the latter that they ever had; and God forbid they should have less. And, above all, may God save us from that enthusiasm that disdains the appropriate means, on the one hand, and from that self-sufficiency which forgets that it is "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord," on the other.

## CHAPTER V.

### HINDERANCES TO REVIVALS—PLAN OF RESISTANCE PROPOSED.

GERMAN RATIONALISM — THE EMIGRATION OF ERROR — SPIRITUALISM AND ITS COGNATES — DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE ETHICAL AND THE DOCTRINAL — A DEFECT IN THE PULPIT — AN ILLUSTRATION ILLUSTRATED — CONCLUSION OF A LEGITIMATE RATIONALISM — THE PREACHER SHOULD STUDY NATURE — A PULPIT REFORM SUGGESTED.

In the last chapter we named, as the most formidable obstacle in the way of revivals, a growing infidelity to the experimental verities of Gospel truth. The tendencies of the age were to materialism and rationalism. These errors, which have nearly ingulfed the evangelism of the Lutheran Reformation on the European continent, were insidious, diffusive, and contagious. Like the cholera, they were now on their Western emigration. To do right was to be right, in the tacit estimation of men generally. The great truths, "Ye must be born again;" "By grace ye are saved through faith;" "He that is born of God hath the witness in himself," were popularly ignored. And as the spiritual life ap-

proached the mysterious, outsiders were willing to give to "mystics," to "fanaticism," to "gray-headed orthodoxy, and superannuated old age," the full monopoly of these things. The mysticism of many of the unclean spirits abroad in the land, such as clairvoyance, spirit-rapping, etc., and the strange experiences of Judge Edmonds, the marvelous and magniloquent revelations of A. J. Davis, and the mystic dreams of Emanuel Swedenborg, are secretly claimed to be *all of a piece* with the spiritual transports of the young convert, and the mysterious transitions of mind that he underwent, as he passed from conversion to sanctification, as described by such writers as Professors Upham and Mahan, Madame Guyon, Mrs. Rogers, and Mrs. Phœbe Palmer. The popular mind, we say, under the far-reaching influence of this rationalistic poison, was coming to regard the spiritual verities of Christianity as all of a piece with those ludicrous marvels, which, like Jonah's gourd, come up in the dark and perish in the light. How best to resist this tendency in the minds of men, becomes the question which our last chapter suggested, because it is manifest, that if the creed of men, whether in the Church or out of it, consists in substituting mere Gospel *morality*

for Gospel *spirituality*, the Church and the world will soon become bankrupt of both. As one step toward curing this evil, we intimated that the pulpit might find it necessary to dwell more frequently and directly upon those experimental verities, upon those truths of the Gospel which spring not from its ethics, but from its doctrines ; and which address not themselves to man's mere intellectual sense of right, but to his *spiritual* nature. These truths do not so much regulate human conduct between man and man, as they open an experimental intercourse between man and his Maker. They involve social intercourse with God. The other class of truths involve more directly our social relations to our fellows.

The pulpit, in insisting upon these spiritual verities that meet the want of our spiritual natures, is generally too technical, obsolete, given to a trite sameness of expression, and sadly wanting in illustration. By being too technical, we mean, that it is wont to content itself by quoting some of the language of the "twenty-five articles," the standard authorities, and appropriate passages of Scripture. This, after all, we apprehend, to the popular mind, is neither explaining nor expounding. It is well enough,

as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. It is wanting in adaptation, in that sense to which we give the phrase of "up with the times," and, in illustration, in that sense in which truth should be illustrated by the things of the present with which men's thoughts are familiar.

Our Saviour's parables illustrate the careful reference he always had in his teaching to the principle just named. We will attempt to illustrate what we mean by an illustration that particularly interests, because it includes what was before in the mind of the hearer. Is the operation of the Divine Spirit, for instance, upon man's moral nature, changing the disposition thereof, objected to, on account of its inconceivableness or profound mystery? Let the force of the objection be broken by an analogy from the natural world. How happens it, the speaker may say, that light, the most imponderable and subtle of all substances, reveals its red in the rose, its white in the lily, its blue in the violet, compounds itself into every hue of beauty in the pride of spring, and stains with vermillion or silvery whiteness the clouds of the sky? Who can conceive of this process, and yet, who dare deny the facts? And these facts become the more striking, when it is remembered that

the virgin petals of the lily of to-day, were yesterday but the *mud* of the swamp. Or, take another illustration from the wondrous doings of that most incomprehensible of physical agents, electricity. Its wonders have now become familiar to the minds of everybody. And, that it does traverse a continent, or an ocean, in a time too short for measurement; that it pervades with unimpeded ease, huge masses of iron; that it drops through mountains of rock with infinitely more ease than our volition can move us through an open door, are all facts which a school-boy, now, does not think of denying. But these are but physical agents, producing visible and wonderful results. To discard them, because the manner in which it is done lies beyond the power of our analysis, or comprehension, would be worse than stupidity. But if such things are true of natural agents, what are we not to expect of spiritual agents? If matter does thus operate upon matter, is it unreasonable to suppose that mind may not so operate upon mind as to produce phenomena correspondingly wonderful? And who does not know that it is but an experimental fact, that even finite mind does influence mind with a transforming power often nearly analogous to

that which natural agents produce before our eyes in the opening bud. But, if we rise from the mind of man to the mind of God, from the spirit of man to the Spirit of God, and presume upon the possibility of an intercourse between God and man, what results does it become most reasonable for us to look for? Why, that our minds be purified, renewed, born again, transformed in their measure into the Divine likeness —these, we say, are the results which a *legitimate* rationalism would look for. Certainly it is not unreasonable to suppose that the mind of God and man may be brought into contact, when the Spirit of God, like an all-pervasive life, touches everything in the vast universe. It is, then, but sheer atheism to laugh at spiritual regeneration as a mere dogma of the Church, discarded by true philosophy; while it is worse than childish to object to anything taught in the Scriptural experience of the Christian because of its mystery or incomprehensibility!

Now, in some such way as the above, would we have the pulpit in its lessons, more immediately logical and illustrative, address the popular mind. We would have the pulpit commune no less with the cross, but at the same time

much more with those "all things which were made by Him" the Victim of the cross. The pulpit should abound more with illustrations fresh from the fountain of nature. The preacher should study nature only second to revelation. The facts of natural science should be as familiar to him as the facts of Bible history.

"Read nature: nature is a friend to truth;  
Nature is Christian, preaches to mankind,  
And bids dead matter aid us in our creed."

It is not a lack of Hebrew, Greek, or Latin, that constitutes a scientific want of the pulpit, by any means, but a want of a knowledge of the natural sciences does; and in no apologetic spirit or tone, would we have the duty discharged. That is, we would not have the pulpit defer, for a moment, to that infidelity that secretly, if not avowedly, challenges these spiritual verities. But we would have it demonstrated that these spiritual verities are actually the highest type of a legitimate rationalism. Such a coming at the mind, we think, would excite thought, and while the word was preached, it would also be expounded in a manner which gathered freshness from the living present. We think, if we mistake not, that

the pulpit must swing itself loose more from the technical and the obsolete, in this momentous department of theology. But, by all means, let it not degenerate into a mere scholarly exhibition of scientific facts, though important they may be in the illustration of the holy record. Let not preaching degenerate into philosophizing, but let philosophy ever keep her place as a servant. The messenger of the pulpit has mistaken his mission whenever he presumes it is primarily an intellectual one. Effort should be made always to move the heart, always to stir the affections, always to awaken deep emotions in alliance with spiritual truths. Were we on a hymeneal errand, on a courting excursion, we would as soon pay our addresses to Powers's statue of the Greek slave, as an excitant of our affections, as to go to church and hear nothing but a purely scientific and intellectual harangue. Intellect, of course, must be there, otherwise the sermon is wanting in intelligence. Science, of course, must be there, otherwise we are annoyed with the blunders of the speaker. But these are but the scaffolding of the builder. There must be life, the life of emotion occasioned by the speaker's communion with God. The Holy Ghost must be

there, of which the speaker is but a medium of intercourse between Heaven and his people: "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power."

## CHAPTER VI.

## P R E A C H J E S U S.

THE CENTRAL GLORY OF THE UNIVERSE — THE WORLD'S GREAT WANT — JESUS MUST BE PREACHED, OR THE PULPIT WILL BECOME EXTINCT — BOSTON UNITARIANISM — UNION BETWEEN CHRIST AND HIS MINISTERS ILLUSTRATED — THE CROSS INVESTED WITH STUPENDOUS EVIDENCES — MERITLESSNESS OF MAN'S RIGHTEOUSNESS — HOW THE SINNER IS SAVED — THE TRUE PROTESTANT IDEA — HOW GOD DESCENDS TO MAN'S CAPACITY — THE INCARNATION — CHRIST ALWAYS THE PREACHER'S THEME.

IN our last, we were touching upon the duty of the pulpit in a given case, in the promotion of revivals. A general hint was all that we indulged in, and all that we intended, ere we passed to the employment of measures by the Church. We may linger in the pulpit long enough to insist upon a common, and yet augustly momentous and precious topic.

The pole-star of the pulpit is the cross. The central idea of the Bible is Jesus. The intelligent soul of the world's history is the idea of the world's Saviour. History would be without order, Providence without polarity, but for Calvary. Redemption is the sweet influence of the

Pleiades, melting in healing odors over the wounded, dying race, amid the wandering music of the stars of the morning ; and which faith only can hear, faith only can see, and faith only can feel. Redemption is the great law of gravitation in the moral world, mysteriously attracting it onward to its destiny, upward to its God. Redemption means reconciliation by virtue of a reason. It is the great, felt want of humanity. "How shall we come before God, and where-withal can we bow ourselves before the high God, and how can man be just with God ?" have constituted the outcry of the crushed nations, with which they have ever filled the ear of the leaden, lazy-footed ages. In the absence of satisfactory answers to these questions, foolish man has attempted to invent answers. What, otherwise, mean the smoking altars of paganism, the hecatombs of victims at the shrine of idols ? What else mean those self-immolations, self-inflicted tortures, and long and painful pilgrimages, which the imperfect annals of man without a Bible are constantly disclosing ? The fact is, a consciousness of guilt, a self-disapproval, and a sense of danger, are universal to humanity. These dark shadows fall upon his soul everywhere, (darker at certain seasons than others,)

as certainly as is his shadow cast from him in the sunlight. Man is instinctively prepared to hear of a Saviour. His condition in the world is to him as "The voice of one crying in the wilderness," saying, "Where is he of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write?" The popular heart feels that a sermon without a Saviour is a solecism. The preacher who preaches most about Jesus and the resurrection, other things being equal, will have the largest and most delighted audiences. It is a striking fact, and yet one often overlooked, that God himself has so arranged, that the principal theme of the pulpit, when properly evolved, will always be found the most popular. Men never complain of hearing too much from the pulpit about Jesus Christ. And it is the evangelical pulpits of the land which alone can succeed in keeping up a congregation. Boston Unitarianism is in the yellow leaf, and, but for its wealth and social powers, the sentimentality, poetry, and learning of its pulpit, would to-day have been numbered among the historic follies of another attempt to perpetuate the public worship of God on earth, without insisting, also, that men ought to worship at the manger and at the cross. The same may be said of Christ-

ianism, Arianism, and various other types of religious error. But even Unitarianism is far from crying after the man Christ Jesus, "Crucify him, crucify him!" "away with such a man from the earth!" If, in their creed, Jesus Christ be not God, he is, nevertheless, the most exalted of creatures--a God-revealed model of perfect humanity. If he did not die to save the sinner, he died as the noblest of martyrs, in the defense of the truth. Now, this error of making the Saviour human, and no more, and investing his death with the glories of martyrdom, and no more, has not been without its power. It has imparted to that pulpit, at least, a dramatic effect. The themes of that pulpit have thus not been without their principal hero. Romance and chivalry, or something analogous to these qualities, have lent to the desk an attraction. Let even this view of Christ be ignored, and the pulpit sink to the mere defender of theism, become deistic, the dexterous of mere ethical lessons, sanctioned, indeed, by God, and impressed by the motives of immortality, and how soon would such a sect of religionists become extinct!<sup>1</sup>

The pulpit, without Christ, becomes secularized, sinks to the level of common things. It

loses, in fact and in the minds of men, all its unearthly, its peculiarity of power, and only becomes a thing of preference, from mere accident or factitious circumstances. A Christless pulpit is as Eden would have been without the river to "water the garden." The life-imparting intimacy between Christ and his Church, between Christ and his ministers, is radiantly illustrated in the first chapter of the Revelation of St. John: "Clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle, [symbolic of his priestly office.] His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters;" he is represented as being in the midst of the "seven golden candlesticks," which were the seven Churches of Asia, and which were selected as generic of the Church in all ages. The seven pastors were "seven stars, which he held in his right hand, while out of his mouth went a sharp, two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun shining in his strength!" O blessed Jesus! how near thou art to thy people, and yet they see thee not! How certainly do thy footfalls waken the echoes of the rudest, the

wild wood sanctuary, or float in sacred accents through the aisles of the houses erected for thee, and yet, how dull their ears of hearing! How certainly dost thou lead thy ambassadors by the hand, and yet, with what timid and faltering steps do they follow!

And now, brothers, in the inventory of good things on which we discourse weekly from the pulpit, let us not forget to preach Jesus. And Jesus first, not subordinately. A system of theology, without Jesus in the center, would be as a system of solar astronomy that left out the sun. "I am the way, the truth, and the life." The name of Jesus is the revolted sinner's password on his return to God. His death is the reason why God can be just, and yet the justifier of every one that believeth in his death. His Divinity, which never died, but only suffered a voluntary obscuration of its glory, not only imparts to the humanity, in which it saw fit to temple itself, an awful sacredness, and to the blood of that humanity an everywhere-reaching efficaciousness, but it furnishes an assurance to the sinner that there could be no mistake about the offering up of the great sin-offering for the world, at Jerusalem, many centuries ago, about the time of the celebration of the symbol of that

event, the Jewish passover. That God presided at the cross, and at the grave, he did more than to set his bow in the heavens, as at the flood, to prove. As then, he registered the evidence of his presence upon the pages of nature; the sun withheld his light, and supernatural darkness prevailed; earthquakes rent the rocks and the temple's vail, and the long-buried dead were made to live again after his resurrection. Stupendous wonders! And yet they are but worthy witnesses, that God, in unerring wisdom and mercy, had "provided himself a sacrifice." Yes, for himself, and for man also. Henceforth, the sinner needs no further sacrifice. Let all altars but the cross be leveled down. It is enough. Jesus hath "tasted death for every man." The sinner is saved, not because he submits to penance, not because he inflicts suffering upon another, but because Jesus "hath borne our sins in his own body on the tree." The sinner is saved, not *because* he repents; not because he prays; not because he believes; not by works of righteousness which he hath done, for all these are but the voluntary acts of appropriating provided mercies, but because Christ died, "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." In repentance there can be no merit, because this

does no more than dignify humanity. In belief there can be no merit, because no man ought to be rewarded for believing that which is true. In doing right, there can be no merit, for this is best for human nature under all circumstances. Such voluntary acts on the sinner's part, then, which he may be induced to perform by the teachings of the holy Gospel, and aided to perform by the Spirit, which is mercifully given to him to enable him to overcome the bent of his nature toward evil, and to balance against the infusion of Satanic influence, such voluntary acts on the sinner's part, we say, only bring him just where the gift of eternal salvation is. "By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." This blessed doctrine of a salvation free for all, and, consequently, can neither be merited nor monopolized by any, is the great central luminary in the firmament of Protestantism. No wonder that it shook the priest-ridden world like an earthquake, when, from being so long lost to it, it was discovered by Luther, apparently accidentally. It will yet shake the heads of pseudo Churches from their thrones, and popes from their chairs. It will shake the earth, ay, and heaven too! It will

shake the earth till it sift out its errors, and then make eternity's long aisles tremulous to the song of its triumphs, and the far-off new-born worlds to clap their hands to the greetings of the spreading music !

O, how blessed and self-commendatory is this truth. It exalts the king and the beggar to the same common level, empowering each with the privilege of settling his spiritual and immortal concerns with his Maker, without the interposition of a fallible, and, it may be, sinister intermediate. It is the republicanism of Christ's spiritual kingdom. "If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." And yet, paradoxical as it may at first sound, man, in the bodings of his first thinkings of salvation, is brought directly in contact with his "fellow," his kindly sympathetic fellow, a priest, "who can be touched with the feelings of his infirmities." In accommodation to that finite mind that cannot grasp or locate its confidence upon a God that is an everywhere present Spirit, much easier than one perishing for want of breath can grasp the four winds in his embrace, God embodies himself in the *man* Christ Jesus, and thus, as it were, locates his presence where local thoughts can come unto him; and so at-

tempers his glory, that we are not intimidated in our approaches, and so blends his love with the sympathies of our common humanity, that, while we are found in kindred affinity with the Son of God, and in natural sympathy with his sufferings, and admiration for the sublime moral beauty of his character, through this door which God has thus opened in our hearts, he *himself* enters; and, as thought expands and faith increases, the awakened sinner, like the convinced Thomas, exclaims of the *man* Christ Jesus, "My Lord and my God!" God was manifested in the flesh. And one of the blessed facts in the mystery of this manifestation is, that God literally speaks to us in the person of our own nature; weeps in our presence such tears as we weep; touches us with a hand of flesh, that he may lay upon our hearts the hand of the Spirit. As man, our Saviour is one of *us*. As God, he is one of the Holy Three. To read the holy Gospel is to read the biography of the Godhead. God's will is not only here revealed, but his character concreted in sinless humanity: and yet, that humanity suffering as a sinner, that believing sinners might escape the damnation of hell.

This blessed theme can never be tame. It imparts to pulpit truth all the naturalism of

heaven, the eternal freshness of Divinity. Every sermon, then, should be preached in the shadow of the cross. Like the incense, which burned perpetually before the Lord in the sanctuary, every sermon should be odorous with the doctrines of Jesus. Nor should we think the theme incapable of new modes of presentation, incapable of new and striking illustrations. Not only is the theme, like certain forms of life, incapable of losing its interest by familiarity, but it is capable of infinite development. It is a fountain of thoughts, as exhaustless as the Divine mind, capable of being expressed by an infinite variety of wordings. The whole Bible is as full of the Spirit of Christ, in every text, sentence, proper name, word, and syllable, as is the whole body of a living man full of life. The geologist might as well expect to dig through some rock or strata, and find some spot, some object, in the ingredients of the globe, unpervaded with the laws of gravitation, as might the Bible student expect to find some desert waste in its pages, unmarked by the footsteps of Him whose goings forth have been from everlasting, and whose last crowning act was to come into humanity, and down into the world, to seek and to save that which was lost.

Brethren of the pulpit, in the promotion of revivals, intensify your sermons by refusing more and more to know anything among men but Jesus Christ and him crucified. Men will welcome the doctrine, for man instinctively feels the need of help from a superior power, without and above him. All men want to be saved, and, therefore, want some one to save them. But, after all, the difficulty lies in getting men to receive the Saviour of the Gospel, in persuading men to believe that this is the only true Saviour, and the only true God. O Jesus! hast thou yet found faith on the earth? Increase in us, that believe the power of that grace, and overcome by thy Spirit the obstinacy of unbelief in others!

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE CLASS-MEETING.

WORKING THE SOCIAL AND SYMPATHETIC PRINCIPLE — MAN MORE SOCIAL AS HE BECOMES MORE RELIGIOUS — THE FOLLY OF ANCHORITISM — THE CLASS-MEETING — THE CLASS-MEETING AS THE MEANS OF CONSECRATING THE SOCIAL PRINCIPLE — CLASS-MEETINGS SUPPLY A NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL WANT — THEIR PHILOSOPHY ILLUSTRATED — THE CONVERSATION OF THE CLASS-ROOM — THE RECLAIMING POWER OF CLASS-MEETINGS — IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION.

In our last, we meagerly glanced at the prominence that should at all times be given by the pulpit to the ever-blessed doctrine of atonement. Amid the vast variety of pulpit themes, we maintained that Christ, like the guiding banner of a battling host, or like the symbolic serpent amid the smitten camp of Israel, should have a paramount prominence.

In further consideration of the obstacles to be overcome, in the prosecution of revivals, we pass now from the pulpit to the Church; and having, in former pages, spoken with some pertinence of the duty of personal religion, (the necessity of stated, incessant, wrestling, private

prayer,) we come now to offer a thought or two on the duty of working the *sympathetic* and *social* principle.

“It is not good for man to be alone.” Man was never made to act with vigor in a condition of isolation. Man, individually, is not the complement of humanity. To turn hermit, for any purpose, is to act the madman, and stultify and dwarf all progress. The biggest of all fools were those, in the dark ages, who turned hermits for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. The sympathetic and social feelings are not mere accidents of human nature; they are cardinal and rational essentials. Man always becomes the more social as he becomes the more enlightened and refined; the more social as he becomes the more like his Maker. True religion is ever subordinating selfishness to the action of the social feelings. This is the Eden soil in which the missionary tree, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations, grows so luxuriantly. Like the patriarch of old, from being blessed, the Christian is ever seeking how he may become a blessing. “I will bless thee: and thou shalt be a blessing.”

But how, as Church members, may we best work this principle for purposes of mutual

spiritual invigoration, edification, felicitation, and Church aggression? As Methodists, we may appropriately call attention here to class-meetings. Not that we would discuss the subject of class-meetings in their conventional or disciplinary relations. It is foreign to our purpose to lug in the question here, whether attendance upon class-meetings should or should not be made a test of membership, attendance upon class-meetings made disciplinarily coercive, or left optional with the communicant. It is the principle which underlies class-meetings that we wish now particularly to consider. This principle, emphatically, is the social principle; and class-meeting is but a provision for the employment and consecration of the social principle for religious purposes; and that this principle should be so employed, we think no one, upon a moment's reflection, can doubt. Other Churches may employ this principle in modes the best adapted to their tastes, prejudices, or views of propriety. We take it for granted, that the employment of this principle in a manner that answers the end of our class-meetings, is everywhere essential to the unity of Christianhood, the communion of the saints, and the strength of the Church. We have a

mode of employing it which seems to have originated with Wesley, providentially, and to have become so inaugurated in form in Methodism, as to have answered the desired end most happily. What Methodist who has tried the experiment, will pretend to say that he has never been made the recipient of great good in the class-meeting? The provision in our Church for the weekly meeting of the class, is at once a confession of a great confidence in the power of social unity as an element of a Church's strength. It is a wholesome, disciplinary safeguard against isolation and individualism among Church members, and in matters of religion. It happily provides for a personal acquaintance among the membership. Acquaintance is necessary to mutual interests, the first step toward friendship; and friendship is but the outer court of the holy temple of brotherly love. The class-meeting provides specially for religious conversation. It extends this blessed privilege to the humblest. It throws around the weak and the unlearned (the inexperienced) the protection of privacy, the encouragement of confidence, and secures to him access to riper experience and maturer wisdom. The strong here are made to bear the infirmities of the weak,

until the weak become strong. Nor is the religious conversation of the class-room wanting in specificness. It is sacredly guarded, from the very nature of the institution, the organic law of the Church, from being miscellaneous, diffusive, or controversial in its character. The leader is to see each member in his class once a week, to inquire how his soul prospers. Personal experience, then, is the theme of conversation in the class-room. And there is a marked peculiarity about the conversation of the class-room. It is not given to human nature for man not to feel, first and foremost, the highest possible interest in himself. This is essential to self-preservation. This may exist without selfishness; and, in this sense, the love of self is made the highest standard of man's love to another. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

We have said, that in the specificness and character of the sacred conversation of the class-room, there is a peculiarity. And we might have said (for this is what we mean, and our meaning shall be illustrated in a moment) that this peculiarity is admirably adapted to the awakening of social sympathy, and to the working with vigor of the social principle for

the promotion of religious ends. Every man knows that nothing delights him more, or awakens his emotions sooner, than to rehearse, to eager listeners, chapters of his own experience. Is it the soldier, who has encountered death in a thousand forms, and yet escaped it? How impassionately eloquent does he grow over account of contending armies! How startlingly descriptive does he become in portraying the dreadful scene, when the excitement of the conflict was over, and the dead strewed the field for miles! the dying pierced the air with their shrieks; the desolating flame shot up into heaven from vanquished cities melting away into smoke; the random gun was heard in the distance, from the retreating foe, as troops of pursuers hung on their rear, while, anon, the weary drum beat the death-thinned ranks to quarters, that the living might be distinguished from the dying, and preparation be made for that most savage and yet saddest of all hours, when a few hundred powder-blackened and blood-besmeared survivors should be detailed to dig pits in which to heap the slain. How, we say, does the old and crippled soldier become reanimated, almost rejuvenated, as he recounts, for the thousandth time, these dread scenes through which he has passed!

Personal experience is so near a part of ourselves, that it never becomes devoid of interest. The sailor, also, will grow impassioned over descriptions of sea adventure and marine disaster. We hear the roar of the storm in his eloquence ; we see the mountain billows lifting their crested tops to the clouds ; we hear the creak of the foundering vessel, the scream of the despairing, and the crash of her masts. Our pioneer fathers, also, how love they to recount the scenes of other days, and to live over again, in magic memory, and by the power of retrospect, that life of wild adventure amid unshorn forests, trials and dangers, struggles and triumphs, which excited to effort, and hastened the more halcyon and eligible days of the present. Like Israel, they then dwelt in tents ; but now, like Israel in the days of David and Solomon, they dwell in ceiled houses, and sit, each under his own vine and fig-tree, no one daring to molest or make afraid. But these are but secular experiences, and yet they delight with the charm of the drama. The heart is led captive by their power. It is mutually a privilege to hear and to relate them.

It is a familiar law of our nature, that what interests us highly, we love to speak of fre-

quently, and never fail to feel the inspiration of the theme. In worldly matters, men never keep silent, or secrets, only from sinister or mercenary motives. The emigrant dwells incessantly upon the better land in the West, and elates in the prospect of realizing improved fortunes. The successful speculator, in the veriest self-defense, in the indulgence of a feeling which it gives him relief to embody in words, waxes warm as he recounts his success. Now, were no provision made in the Church for the mutual relation of experience, a *great natural want would have been unprovided for.* And it is but a sad proof of the want of interest which Christians feel, when they do not delight both in hearing and relating their Christian experience. Did they but think and feel more upon the subject of religion, it would be unnatural for them not to talk more about it. But as to hear others talk about it, has a tendency to excite thought and feeling, it can but be regarded as a wise provision of the Church, that she has instituted class-meetings, and those kindred associations, the love-feast, general class, etc. How often are they found quickening the lukewarm, reclaiming the backslider, opening the eyes of the blind and the mouths of the dumb! Who has not often

resorted to them out of respect for the mere discipline of the Church, and returned delighted and refreshed? "Those that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." The social law involved in the case, has operated like the wine and oil upon the victim of the thieves, between Jerusalem and Jericho. The atmosphere of the class-room has been to the dry and deadened heart, as the touch of the bones of Elisha upon the dead man hastily obtruded into that prophet's sepulcher. The bitter waters of discontent, disaffection, surmise, and alienation, have been made to feel a sweetening power like the waters of Marah, in which Moses threw the healing lotion prescribed by God.

But we digress. We were speaking of the grand peculiarity of the conversation of the class-room. This peculiarity borrows additional power from the consideration that the personal experience to which it is confined, is not secular, but religious experience. What is the experience of the soldier or the sailor, the pioneer or the emigrant, to the experience of the soldier of the cross, the traveler from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City, where death is swallowed up of victory, and the shining sisters of immortality bid the weary pilgrim welcome,

and he will go no more out forever? What fiction half so strange as the truth, as portrayed in the drapery of fiction, in the dream of the victim of Bedford jail? Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress has been unequaled in its popularity, simply because it is a truthful diorama of the highest life which a man can lead on this earth, the Christian's life. In the class-meeting, the brother freely discloses his struggles with the world, the flesh, and the devil. He dwells upon those deeds of heroism performed by one in his efforts to govern his own spirit. "Greater is he that governeth his own spirit, than he that taketh a city." Not in the spirit of self-exaltation does he dwell upon his deeds of success, his triumphs over humanity's greatest foe, but gives to the Author of helping grace, all the glory. How beautiful to witness from week to week, a brother's growth in goodness, his progress in holiness. What a thrill of congratulation and emulation do such testimonials impart to the worshiping circle. Nor is it less useful, though solemnly sad to hear a backslider, or a fallen brother, relate the process of his departure from God and duty, how, little by little, first by the sin of omission, and then of commission, he resumed again the road that leadeth to destruction.

Confession relieves his own mountain-burdened heart, and inspires the brethren with confidence to rally again about him to his rescue, and to welcome home again, like the father of the prodigal, him who was lost. Another brother in broken accents, and in unlettered language it may be, may testify to us of the Spirit's workings and of the word's whisperings, instinct with life by the Spirit—"my words are spirit and life"—in a manner that so perfectly corresponds with our own experience, that one is made to feel that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word shall be established." Faith burns with increased brightness, as when the half-expiring lamp receives a fresh supply of oil, and distinct vision seems awfully and yet sweetly near. These, brethren, are the Mount Tabor visions of our disciplehood, and, like the disciples who returned from that vision, and descended from that mountain height, to encounter new and severer trials, we are prepared by these blessings for renewed conflicts with the flesh and the world.

It had not been our design to enter the class-room, to reveal its family-like privacies and privileges, its blessedness and its glory. But what we meant to say, and will now say, is this: that Christians, in order to arouse thought upon

the subject of religion, in the minds of sinners, must have constant living, active thoughts upon the subject themselves. And if their minds are thus interested, they will seek to *talk* about it, seek to call into action the great social principle which constitutes, so far as anything human can, the power of the class-meeting. And, brother, if morally insensible, if mentally apathetic and dumb upon the subject of thy soul's salvation, go where you can hear others talk about it; go, even though your heart be not free to it, and their conversation shall (and it seldom ever fails to) excite an interest in you.

Finally, as we in our first chapter intimated, the first obstacle to a revival, which a Church has to overcome, is for Church members to speak oftener to one another, and thus revive themselves. More frequent intercourse and converse for religious purposes alone, constitute a great want of the Church at present. The almost universal neglect of attendance on class-meetings either in their stated form, or by the working of the principle that constitutes their power in some form, is the evil day that has fallen upon Methodism.

It can scarcely be said of Methodists now, as was said of the godly in the days of Malachi:

“Then they that feared the Lord *spake often* one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that *thought* upon his name.” If, among the angels, a special secretary be now employed to record the religious conversations of Methodists, whether in or out of class-meetings, we fear that his office is almost reduced to a sinecure. Preachers preach enough upon the subject of religion, they preach well enough upon the subject, but neither preachers nor people *converse* often enough upon the subject of religion, vital, experimental, and spiritual godliness. May God grant that our people may again gather around the class-room, like the sons of Levi around Moses at Mount Sinai, when rebellious Israel wandered after the golden calf.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### REVIVALS A WANT OF OUR NATURE AND A NECESSITY OF THE CHURCH.

DEFINITION OF REVIVALS—ALL HISTORY ILLUSTRATES THEIR NECESSITY—HOW THE QUESTION IS TO BE VIEWED—RELIGION AND NATURE TOO OFTEN DIVORCED—THE CONDITION OF THE CHURCH WITHOUT REVIVALS—THE MORAL BEAUTY OF A REVIVAL MANIFESTATION.

A REVIVAL implies an increased interest on the subject of religion, the sanctification of souls, the reclaiming of backsliders, and the conversion of sinners. Under such circumstances, religious manifestations and demonstrations become extraordinary, and the Church, in seeking a name for such a state of things, adopted the Scriptural one of revival. And it would be quite easy to show from history, that from the days of the exodus to the “day of Pentecost,” and from thence to Luther or Whitefield and Wesley, and from Wesley to the days of the Tennetts and Edwardses of New-England “to this present,” that such religious *states* and religious social *conditions* occurring frequently, or at longer intervals, have

been indispensable to the Church's spiritual progress, and apparently necessary to prevent her from extinction. "But," says one, "the Church should seek to be in a condition of continuous revival." Certainly she should. This is but the utterance of one of those truisms which squints toward an apathetic conservatism upon the subject of revivals, without removing any of the difficulties in the way of their discussion. It is a mere begging the question. The Church that seeks, and seeks right, to be in a continuous revival state, will generally be so; not that we believe, for reasons that we shall offer presently, that such Church would be at all times equally excited.

In discussing the merits of revivals, or the measures to be employed in their promotion, the question is not so much what men ought to *be*, as what human nature *is*; not so much what the Church *ought* to do, as what the Church can be *induced* to do. The question is one of fact and practice, and not of theory and abstraction. We aver, then, that it is not the law of human nature to be equally excited upon the same subject at all times, let the subject be never so momentous. Nor is it the law of human nature to be equally easily moved by the same subject at all times,

though all things may be equal, as to the mode of appliance.

We deem these two propositions too obvious to need extended illustration. To assert them is to prove them. An equal susceptibility of excitement at all times, and the continuance of an equal measure of interest through every day and hour of our being, upon the same subject, would, in fact, neutralize all revivals. Man, individually, or the Church in the aggregate, would present nothing but the manifestation of the same unvarying monotony. Nature herself, though governed by laws most stubbornly uniform, yet is ever exemplifying a great variety and broad contrasts in the fulfillment of the same great offices. Some summers are longer and hotter than others; a greater quantity of rain falls during one season than another. Some winters are much colder than others. For months, the snow of winter may sometimes mantle the earth, when another winter may occur in which nature omits this crystal robe. Now to ask why the Church is not always in a state of revival, seems to us much like asking why all summers are not precisely of the same length and temperature, and all rains and dearths are not of the same continuance.

Some such religious phenomena, then, as revivals, in the very nature of things, are always to be looked for in the Church, provided nature be given fair play, and be not, as it so often has been, unnaturally taught. Under the pretense of doing honor to religion, it has often been sadly divorced from the true philosophy of human nature. Man's spiritual emotions, like any other class of his emotions, are subject to a law similar to that which controls the waves and the winds. They retire to gather strength to come again ; they lull, that nature may enjoy the deep hush and quiet of a calm. Take notice, we do not maintain the necessity of backsliding in summer in order to be reclaimed by an extra effort in winter, which practically seems to be an error into which some poor souls fall, who are governed disproportionately by emotion and feeling, there being little intelligence and faith present. We repeat, then, that revivals constitute the invigorating and natural festivals of the Church. Like the world without a Sabbath, and like the family without its holidays, its sweet remembrances of birthdays, and matrimonial days, meetings and greetings, which lift the heart of home afresh into third-heaven visions, and open the tear fountain as if the

head were waters—without revivals, we say, the Church would become an ice palace. Religion would petrify into mere forms, a train of burdensome or fantastic ceremonials; a round of mere notions in the head, and even these notions would lose all their power over thought and reflection, and the very words in which they are couched, whether Latin or English, it matters not, would not be understood by the devotee. This state of things finds its type in Gothic architecture, read prayers, rubrics, the burning of wax candles by daylight, and learned divines quarreling over an ecclesiastical regalia, which would enable them to dispute with the clown his place in the “sports of the ring.” Its hugest concrete, however, is found in Romanism, the nightmare of the nations for so many ages. We would rather gaze upon the starting tear that traced the rough and bronzed cheek of some honest yeoman, and see in that tear a prophetic ocean of eternal felicity, in some log school-house, in which the spirit of revivals was abroad upon its welcome mission, than to look for an hour upon the most magnificent pageant that ever issued from the gate of St. Peter’s. We would rather hear a half-suppressed “Halleluiah,” a “Bless God, O my soul, and forget not all his

benefits," uttered by some aged mother in our Israel, followed by the stifled groan and drooped head of that young man, for whom she has so long prayed; we would rather listen to such music, while the faithful preacher presses the truth that Jesus saves, and saves now, than to stand for an hour amid the magnificent aisles and arches of the cathedral of the Bishop of Canterbury, and listen to the deep-toned organ, whose combined voices, almost like the seven thunders of the throne, sweep in a gust of mere *artificial* and *head* music up to that God who alone delighteth in the worship of the broken and contrite hearted. There is food for the heart in revivals. They are as necessary to the health and purity of the Church, as is congenial air to the invalid, or salt and soap to the health and cleanliness of civilization.

The proper management of a revival forms no small part of that wisdom necessary in the winning of souls. The law of our nature above evolved, may remove some difficulties, and suggest some useful practical lessons to our brethren. Let them remember that revivals are necessities of the Church, that the state of things understood by the term is nothing more than what we may expect in view of what human nature is.

Let them remember, also, that the Spirit of God never forces human nature to the destruction of its freedom. To wait, then, for the Spirit of God to get the people ready for a revival, before we ourselves commence making direct efforts to that end, is preposterous. And not to make special efforts in religious matters, in view of the fact, that man needs seasons of special excitement upon the subject of religion as well as any other, is also absurd. But of the "times and the seasons" when these special efforts should be commenced, it may require all the wise, prayerful scrutiny of the pastor to determine. They may be commenced very untimely. Their omission at other times may be a great misfortune to the Church. "He that winneth souls is wise."

## CHAPTER IX.

## PROTRACTED MEETINGS.

THE ADAPTATION OF PROTRACTED MEETINGS TO OUR WANTS—  
ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY MEANS OF GRACE—TAKING  
ADVANTAGE OF TIMES AND SEASONS—PASTORAL ECONOMY—  
OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

IF it be true that religion does not change the laws of our nature, (regeneration being but a change of the heart, from the unnatural to the natural—sin being a perversion of our nature,) but conforms to them, as the lightning, that strikes the tree, follows the grain of the wood ; and if it be true that, in religious matters, the interest and excitement of Christians are governed to some extent, as in other matters, and are subject to ebbs and flows, to seasons of less and seasons of greater fervor, as was demonstrated in the last chapter, then must the services of the Church be conformed to this state of things. To the ordinary means of grace must sometimes be added the extraordinary. Stated meetings will sometimes need to be protracted. Protracted

meetings, then, have their foundations in the very nature of the case. A protracted meeting differs, after all, from the ordinary means of grace only in this: it consists of more frequently employing the means of grace, of appointing meetings with *shorter* intervals between them. It occurs to us, from many considerations, that this is a most wise course. We may name a few of these considerations. The officiating preacher may detect in his audience a more than ordinary disposition to hear the word. Secondly, it may be a season of the year of comparative leisure. Commerce is not hurried, navigation is closed, winter reigns over the farmer's fields, and he hibernates upon the superabundance of the last season; or, it may be one of those seasons (rather rare seasons nowadays!) when the public mind is comparatively free from a state of *qui vive* and solicitude, owing to events at Washington, Kanzas, or the Crimea, and to which excitement every flash of the telegraph makes a new contribution. Or the members of the Church themselves may request of the pastor the privileges of such extended services, and special efforts for the good of their own souls, and to enable them more satisfactorily, and with greater boldness, to dis-

charge those duties which they owe to unconverted children, kindred, and neighbors. Or the pastor, fully awake to the fact that a season of leisure is always a season of levity; a season of routs, *soirées*, balls, frolics, nocturnal excursions, etc., and that such a state of things not only needs extraordinary effort as a counteracting check, but that protracted meetings may then become necessary to keep *Christians* out of temptation and mischief. Now, of one or all of these circumstances, the pastor may desire to take advantage. Spiritual economy in a pastor is a mark of great wisdom. It is often that Satan can be checkmated in no other way. To take advantage of our delinquency, or want of alertness, is an old trick of the devil. He sowed the tares among the wheat "while men slept." Wise is he in winning souls, who successfully employs similar tactics. The devil is not omnipresent, though human depravity is. How far we may practically calculate upon this fact we do not undertake to say. But we will say, that every pastor whose Church is growing, and not dying on his hands, will detect occasions when the necessity of employing extraordinary efforts will seem most clearly indicated; and in such cases such meetings are seldom, if ever,

failures. A pastor should be a careful reader of the *esprit de corps* of his Church and congregation, of the moral physiognomy, so to speak, of the community in which he labors. He should study it as a patient in danger of death, eternal death; study it with that careful scrutiny with which the conscientious, scientific, and logical physician studies the symptoms of some illustrious patient. How carefully does he ponder over the number of pulse-beats in a minute! What studious comparisons and deductions does he make from the beating of the heart, the color and temperature of the skin, or the reports of the stethoscope to the ear! How carefully does he watch the sun in the heavens, and the thermometer on the wall, that he may make proper allowance for the influence of atmospheric changes upon the nervous system! With equal scrutiny, and from more exalted motives, should the pastor study the spiritual condition of his flock, and look to occurring circumstances as affecting it more or less friendly. Some neighborhood calamity; the prevalence of a dread epidemic saddening the thoughts of men, and turning them toward eternity; the hand of God in an especially-marked manner, either in judgment or mercy, may be taken advantage of by

the pastor, as indicative of the "set time" for God to favor Zion.

Nearly all the arguments against protracted meetings which we ever heard or read, were based upon their abuse. Such arguments are often plausible, but seldom legitimate. There is no good thing in the world that men do not abuse, and it would seem that the better the thing, the more liable to abuse. Now, we maintain that there are very few good things, if any, which ought to be abandoned because subject to abuse; while, if we should abandon everything that was subject to abuse, we would have nothing left. It is objected to protracted meetings, that the extraordinary intensification of the means of grace which they imply, causes our people to undervalue the ordinary means of grace. Such may sometimes be the case, but ought not to be, and when so, it is but another of those many instances so frequently occurring, in which the pastor will find it necessary to teach his people the "way of the Lord more perfectly." We regret to mention, however, that but too much reason is often given for this objection, by the conduct of pastors and Christians themselves. With them, practically, the ordinary means of grace are attended to with extraordi-

ary coldness and indifference—their occurrence looked to as a matter-of-course thing, and the duties they require are to be attended to as a kind of penance or trade. In the genuine spirit of the meeting, no difference should be allowed to exist between the ordinary Sabbath-day service, or the weekly prayer-meeting, and the meeting that may have lasted a week. Christians should always be in earnest in the service of God. And, dear brethren in the ministry, this earnestness must, and will, always take its key-note from the pulpit.

Another objection is, that the long-continued excitement consequent upon protracted meetings, is wont to be followed by a sad reaction, a season of great spiritual languor and dullness. We are persuaded that this objection is often very much magnified. In an experience of twenty years, we have never witnessed the results charged in the objection, unless it be in those individual instances of persons being peculiarly given to an excess of the emotional, and who have been betrayed into excesses and extravagances. Such persons are rather the exemplifications of the exceptions of the rule that governs in the case, than the rule. Such individuals, also, as every one knows, possess an

idiosyncrasy of constitution, and are always abnormal in the social mass. And, if they drop spiritually dead soon after a protracted meeting, this seems to be their natural condition, and, but for the protracted meeting, they would never be spiritually alive. We are not at all disposed to calculate the chances of the salvation of such, but we have sometimes thought that these chances might be much increased, should their demise occur in a protracted meeting, camp-meeting, or some other occasion of unusual religious excitement. For, unless favored at death with this special start toward the good world—unless, like Moses, they die upon the mountain-top, they may never reach the gates of the new Jerusalem. It may be all to the credit of protracted meetings, and their cognate meetings, that they, so far, make provision for such persons. And as to the reaction objected to, so far as it relates to the Church generally, it may be but the necessary result of cause and effect, and in no wise an unhealthy reaction. For we again repeat, that, taking our nature as it is, we are always to look for ebbs and flows, for action and reaction. And the reaction, when healthy, is as necessary as the action, and both together are infinitely preferable to that spiritual dull-

ness, lukewarmness, and formality, that grow so rapidly in a Church, in the absence of occasional, special, and protracted religious effort, and for which such efforts seem the only specific.

## CHAPTER X.

## PROTRACTED MEETINGS.

EXTRAVAGANT DEMONSTRATIONS — CORRECT TEACHING NEEDED — RELIGIOUS RESPONSES — LET ALL METHODISTS SAY “AMEN” — ALL CORNERS SHOULD BE “AMEN CORNERS” — OBJECTIONS ANSWERED — THE INVETERATE FAULT-FINDER — NOTHING HUMAN PERFECT — APOSTASIES IN REVIVALS — THEIR OCCURRENCE CONSIDERED — THE MORAL STATE OF THE BACKSLIDER — NO ONE EVER MADE WORSE BY CONVERSION — THE BACKSLIDER THE FIRST TO BE RE-CONVERTED.

PROTRACTED meetings have been objected to, because many of the worshipers have often lost sight of religion, and religious decorum and order, and been betrayed into extravagances, both of speech and “bodily exercise,” unbecoming the house of God. Our answer is, that, in the matter of spiritual manifestations, as there is a “diversity of gifts,” we would set ourself up as a judge of these extravagances, with very great caution. Our judgment of order, in the house of God, under such circumstances, may be very erroneous. Nature, in numberless instances, presents to the eye nothing but a scene of confusion and havoc, where the most perfect order reigns,

and the greatest good is to be the result. We will venture to say, however, that extravagances have occurred at such meetings, that might easily have been prevented by the right kind of teaching. Somehow or other, some have confounded the disciplining of the emotions with the "quenching of the Spirit." The pulpit, at times, has very erroneously taught, that when the Christian's spiritual emotions are struggling for vent or expression, it is never safe not to cry out or shout, whatever the surrounding circumstances may be, lest, by so doing, the Spirit be grieved. Now, weak and nervous persons, taking the advantage of such a sentiment, have been often found annoying fellow-worshippers, and seriously interfering with the edification of the meeting, by the untimeliness and obtrusiveness of their demonstrations of joy. The brother or sister that must needs shout aloud for an hour, and that hour the hour of preaching, and who has been indulged in doing so under the pretension that it was eminently his or her duty to do so, and that neither could help it, is simply to be pitied more than to be blamed. That such *can* help it, every reflecting person has come to believe. That they think they cannot or dare not help it, no one for a moment doubts. But this

is the result either of erroneous teaching, or of the absence of all teaching upon the subject. Let us be understood. We doubt not for a moment that the power of the Holy Ghost may, sometimes, prompt involuntarily to a momentary shout, and when of this type, we love to hear it at any time. But the idea that it will urge involuntarily to a continuous squall for half an hour, is simply ridiculous. We are not "opposed to shouting" at religious meetings, but we are opposed to unnatural and fanatical shouting. And as to the hearty "Amen," (the frequent religious response,) when these manifestations of warmth and earnestness shall have ceased in the M. E. Church, then will her pure gold have become very dim, and her glory, if not departed, be departing. We regard such responses as a duty, and as necessary to keep up the proper sympathy between the pulpit and the people. They bespeak the earnest, social, and simultaneous character of our worship. They reveal our Protestantism. They show that the congregation has no faith in that worship in which the people's business with their Maker is "done up" by priests and proxies. They have been regarded thus by the Church in all ages, and even the prayer-book of the self-styled, *the Church, tru*

to this fact of history, provides for these responses. Let all Methodists, then, say "Amen" in the great congregation. Give us the people to preach to, who convert all corners of their church into "Amen corners," and who both *live*, as well as respond or shout "Amen." As for the preacher whom a good hearty "Glory to God," or other devotional ejaculation, throws entirely off his equilibrium, we hope that if such be a Methodist preacher, the brethren will shout him out of the pulpit, and clear back to Jericho, where he may tarry until his beard be grown, and he endowed with "power from on high." As to the extravagances mentioned, then, they have, indeed, been the abuse of a good thing among us, which will yield at once to intelligent instruction. And even these extravagances have, as yet, done so little harm, in proportion to the immense good that has been the result of our revival demonstrations, that they constitute but a very feeble objection to them. Imperfection, more or less, enters into all our plans, and their execution. It is not given to man to secure to himself, in this world, an unmixed good. "If I say I am perfect, it shall prove me perverse." God may perfect his gracious work in us, and this is spiritual

perfection, often (but with very doubtful propriety) called Christian perfection. And the Christian in whom God's work is thus perfected is, nevertheless, not infallible; and while it is not erroneous to apply the epithet, sinless, to his actions, it is erroneous to claim that anything he does is personally perfect. And he whose transcendental notions of Christian character and Church order are always finding the preacher falling a little below what he ought to be, always finding fault with things in the Church as not being exactly right, is certainly unfitted for the next world, and but very poorly fitted to do good in this. The seeker of perfection, in matters of human judgment in this world, like the evil spirit in the Gospel, when cast out, will always be found wandering in desert places, seeking rest and finding none. We never expect to attend a meeting of any kind, in which everything that occurs will please us; and, indeed, we go to Church partly on that account. For the strong should always be present to bear the infirmities of the weak, while the weak should be where the strong are, that they may acquire strength. What, then, are these extravagant demonstrations but another manifestation of human imperfection? And when

anything in which human agency is employed shall be free from manifestations of imperfection, some reason will then exist for claiming that revivals should be free from them.

Another objection to protracted meetings is, and it is the last we will mention, that they are apt to be followed by apostasy on the part of a large majority of the converts. Well, apostasies happen in the Church at all times, whether the subjects were converted on these special, or other occasions. It is rather a difficult question to determine whether the converts of a protracted meeting are more apt to backslide than those of other occasions, as by far the greater number of conversions occur in protracted meetings, and kindred efforts. Apostasies cannot occur where there are no converts to backslide. And as to the number of backsliders following in the train of a protracted meeting, it is often exaggerated. Instances where apostasies have been very numerous, certainly have occurred. But, as an offset against this, it may be urged, that, on other occasions, persons brought out in religion by these protracted efforts, have almost unanimously stood firm.

In the great revivals in which the Calvinistic Churches of New-England shared so largely, it

has been subsequently shown that apostasies were most encouragingly rare. The subject of their results has been examined with much care.

In 1829, a letter was addressed to the Congregational ministers of Connecticut, proposing, among others, the following inquiries: First. What was the whole number of professors of religion in your Church at the commencement of the year 1820? Second. What number were added to your Church by profession during the years 1820-4? Third. Of those who are now members of your Church, what proportion may be considered as the fruits of a revival, and what is their comparative standing for piety, and active benevolent enterprise? Dr. Hawes, of Hartford, writing under date March 12th, 1832, says: "I am able to state that the answers were in a high degree satisfactory." It appeared that a very large proportion of all who are now members of the Congregational Churches in this state, became such in consequence of revivals; that the relative proportion of such, as revivals have been multiplying, has been continually increasing; that the most active and devoted Christians are among those who came into the Church as fruits of revivals; that those Churches in which re-

vivals have been most frequent and powerful, are the most numerous and flourishing; and that in all the Churches thus visited with Divine influence, there has been a great increase of Christian enterprise and benevolent action. Bishop M'Ilvaine, under date April 6th, 1832, writes: "I owe too much of what I hope for as a Christian, and what I have been blessed with as a minister of the Gospel, not to think most highly of the eminent importance of promoting this spirit, and consequently guarding it against all abuses. Whatever I possess of religion, began in a revival. The most precious, steadfast, and vigorous fruits of my ministry, have been fruits of revivals. I believe that the spirit of revivals, in the true sense, was the simple spirit of the religion of apostolic times; and will be more and more the characteristic of those as the day of the Lord draws near."—*Sprague on Revivals.*

Again, who are these backsliders? It is said that God is married to them. We hold not that conversion implants an undying germ of grace, however much we may apostatize. But we do hold to the doctrine that there is a very high and mysterious relation between the backslider and his God. The impressions made in genuine con-

version, may be covered up by subsequent apostasies. Their possessor may deny their existence, but still they are there, with a kind of living power, like the handwriting on the wall, that so troubled the luxurious monarch. The spiritual affections having been once warmed into life, the memory thereof lingers, and will obtrude itself, in hours of silence and of thoughtfulness, upon the conscience, like those memories of home that haunted the swine-feeding and starving prodigal. Does death threaten? The backslider will soon give evidence that he understands the alphabet of Christianity. Men are never worse for having been once converted, and their restoration to the favor of God, after all, is generally more easily effected, from the fact that they once tasted that Jesus was precious.

In all genuine revivals, the backsliders are among the first to be converted. Away, then, with the objection, that we are to be hindered from employing those means of grace which so often result in the conversion of many, because, of this many, some backslide.

We repeat, then, that protracted meetings constitute a requirement of the Church, but that we should not exalt them to the depreciation of the

stated means; that their abuses can and ought to be corrected; that they constitute the only specific against the Church's relapse into formalism; that those who object to them, make up their objections of their abuses; and that those who do not employ them, substitute nothing better, and seldom succeed in securing the conversion of sinners as well as those who do. Protracted meetings should be the outgrowth, generally, of that well-instructed condition of the Church, brought about by the faithful labors of the pastor. The ordinary means of grace should seem, of themselves, to push themselves out into the extraordinary. Protracted meetings are a natural growth of the Church, and not a graft upon the original tree.

## CHAPTER XI.

## NECESSITY OF AGGRESSIVE ENTERPRISE.

A RARE BUT INSIDIOUS EVIL EXPOSED — THE FEARFUL PREACHER — HIS FEARS FOUNDED IN A FALSE PHILOSOPHY — A STUNTED CHURCH — INSTRUCT THE PEOPLE IN THE AGGRESSIVE MOVEMENTS OF THE CHURCH — THEY ONLY GROW STRONG BY BEARING BURDENS — THE "QUARTER OF A DOLLAR" TYPE OF METHODISM — SPIRITUAL BABIES AT FORTY — PLANS AND PURPOSES SHOULD BE LARGE — REASONS WHY THE WEST HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY FAVORED WITH REVIVALS — THE PREACHER WHO WILL BE BLESSED WITH THEM — A WORKING LAITY DETERMINES A CHURCH'S PROSPERITY — DANGER OF METHODISM BEING OUTSTRIPPED BY SISTER SECTS.

"BRING ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." "The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." "The diligent hand maketh rich." "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he hath pur-

posed in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you."

The pertinence of the above passages of Scripture to our present purpose will appear presently. We wish to expose a great error which, though not everywhere prevalent, yet is it too prevalent if found in one case in fifty. It is an insidious error, which may exist in cases sufficiently extreme to excite attention but rarely; and yet, like unseen miasma, this error may work a wider mischief than we suppose. What we mean is this: Naturally enough, and religiously enough, one of the first objects of concern with a Methodist preacher is, how he may best secure the raising of his "claim," which, from its smallness, is every cent needed by himself or family, to whom he first and foremost owes duty. On his arrival, therefore, upon his circuit or station he reconnoiters at once the ability of his people to support him, and enters into considerations as to their probable liberality. The conclusion is, that if his people are not pressed hard for other pecuniary objects, they are fully able to, and most certainly will, "meet his claim." True, a parsonage should be built, or

the old one repaired ; the Church should be renovated, or a new one built ; the library of the Sabbath school should be enlarged and replenished ; a box of books should be sent for, and the people urged to buy ; every family should be visited, and urged to take some one or two of our periodicals ; and then there is the presiding elder's claim ; and besides incidental expenses, applications for collections for some itinerant object of benevolence, there are the stated collections : collections for missions, the Bible cause, Sunday-School Union, Tract cause, Fifth Collection, collection for expenses of delegates, etc. Now our fearful brother runs over this long list, and with a most lugubrious sigh and look resolves honestly, out of self-protection, to give just as many of them the "go-by" as he can. His philosophy is, that the less frequently people are called upon to give, and the less they are required to give, the easier will it be to raise that little. A more erroneous sentiment could scarcely be entertained. It is untrue to the laws of our mental and moral nature ; contradicted by every day's experience, and exposed and condemned by the Scriptures. The sentiment, also, is incalculably deleterious in its effects upon the preacher. It generates fearfulness and selfish-

ness. The former is weakness, and the latter is apt to manifest itself in croaking and censoriousness. For the preacher who trembles at this large competition, is almost sure to find his own pay coming in tardily, grudgingly, and stintedly. Under such a pastor the Church feels that its liberality has put on a Chinese shoe. It moves slowly and sluggishly, for the want of the inspiration of an example of an aggressive enterprise in its pastor. If periodicals are subscribed for, the brethren make application to their pastor, and not their pastor to them. The Disciplinary collections are taken up, unaccompanied by any very explicit explanation, or urgent solicitation from the pulpit. If the work of church repairing or church building goes on, it originates with the laity, by seeming sufferance of the pastor; or, what is most commonly the case, is only talked of by the brethren during the term of service of such a preacher. Who does not know that in all these matters the pastor must not say, "Go on," but "Come on?" Rarely is it that a revival breaks out under such a clerical administration, and for the reasons intimated in the above scriptures. Like Mount Ebal, such a charge is wont to be mantled with barrenness.

Who are the ministers most liberally supported among us? Are they the disciples of this school of the philosophy of benevolence? The results of even a casual observation will always furnish but one answer to these questions. Twenty-three years' scrutiny in this direction, has fixed this conviction in our mind, that the preacher who is most apprehensive about his support, has the greatest reason to be; and that the man who neglects to draw out the liberality of the Church for other objects besides that of himself, will not fare half so well as the brother who pursues a widely different course. Indeed, there is no department of truth so admirably calculated to stimulate a Church to look well after its pastor, and build up its home interests, as a thorough indoctrination into our various systems of benevolent and aggressive enterprise. A people ignorant of our current literature, destitute of our periodicals, with very little of the missionary spirit, is expected to take liberal views in supporting the preacher who is sent to them! How hugely absurd! It would be quite easy now to point to districts in our Zion, where the fathers and the mothers—good, pious souls—seem not to have the slightest idea that it is anything less than heresy to teach that “quarter-

age" does not mean a quarter of a dollar, paid once in three months; and that by a free Gospel is meant that God would convert the world without the money of the Church; the gold and silver belonging to the members being no longer his; that Christians were *proprietors* of their possessions, and not *stewards*. Thirty-five or forty years ago, they paid the preacher this by a hard effort, and divided with him their pot of hominy, and it was all that was required. Since that time, their broad alluvial acres have become worth thousands upon thousands, and their barns burst out with the pressure of their contents. They have, indeed, kept *their* faith, amid this elevation from poverty to prosperity. But, if they have grown in grace, they have not grown in knowledge. Their conservatism is that of ignorance and bigotry. We do not say that they are not Christians, but we do say that they are just such Christians as the erroneous pastoral policy we are exposing is well calculated to produce. With all their loud shoutings at camp-meetings, they are dwarfs in the Church of God, and will be monsters of minuteness among the angels of heaven. They spent their childhood where the schoolmaster was not abroad, and commenced their Christian career

without *reading*. They have continued it without reading. The Church of which they are members, is to them as much of a *terra incognita*, as is the empire of Russia to one of its serfs. Their souls never felt the expansive sympathy of our great organized functions, for the purpose of "spreading Scriptural holiness over these lands." They might, did they but know it, (and the act would be a mighty blessing to them,) give their thousands and tens of thousands for the endowment of colleges, replenishing of our exhausted missionary treasury, or the spread of religious literature. But, to solicit of such brethren what it is no more than simple duty for them to do, actually discourages, if it does not disgust and alienate them. It is like teaching dogmatically the profoundest truths of our theology to an infant class in Sabbath school. Now, such a crop of Christians as these, are sustained and nursed up for heaven by the Church. Yes, nursed ; for they will be children all their lives, spiritual babies of forty or fifty years of age. They are sustained by the Church ; they do not sustain it. We rejoice to think they may be "*scarcely*" saved, but we do not believe in sowing for such a crop. In the former period of our history they formed a good

army of occupation. In making additions to our conquered territory, we find them of little avail. The time has come in our own history when efforts for the world's conversion must be made on a larger scale. Work of a masculine, massive, colossal character, must distinguish our ministry and people. Our piety must be backboned with principle, and rendered prophet-visioned, by standing just where the throne flashes its ceaseless light earthward. Our people must be a reading people, or they will be a weak people; they must be a working people, or they will become spiritually dyspeptic for the want of exercise; and our piety will be made up of spasms, strongly tinctured with animal fervors, and based upon half principles. There is a sense in which a Church may always be said to be in a revival state, if all its members but be hard at work to accomplish some great object of Church aggression. It may be the building of a church edifice, or the establishing of a seminary. One reason, as it seems to us, why the West, both this winter and last, has been distinguished by such a large number of revivals, is, that our people are all at work, building churches and parsonages, establishing schools, new church organs, etc. And it will

generally be found that that preacher who has not secularized himself by inordinate land speculations, the purchase of railroad stock, etc., and who is not fearful and unbelieving on the subject of his own support, and who has his hands the deepest in this good work—the greatest number of irons in the fire—will be found the most certainly to be blessed with a revival, and the most certainly to get a competent support.

We have spoken of the activities of Methodism in the Northwest as it finds itself without a shelter, and must needs meet the want. This suggests to us a great fact of modern date in the history of sister denominations, going alike to illustrate the fact that a *working laity will always graduate a Church's prosperity*. With Methodists the principle was early incorporated in the order of their worship, that the Church member should not only be privileged, but that it is made his duty to reveal the state of his faith and Christian experience before his brethren from time to time, and at the same time his benevolence in the support of the institutions of the Church should be taxed. This provision is found in the class-meeting, where those who love the Lord speak often one to another, and make weekly contributions for the support of the

ministry and relief of the poor. Here, we repeat, was an early provision for the continuous working of the laity, and just as long as it could be carried into effect, Methodism was little else than another name for a continuous revival. But no adequate provision, we apprehend, has been made for the working of the laity in other evangelical Churches. In the course of events, however, work, noble work, has been thrust upon them. In the Missionary, Tract, Sabbath-School, and other glorious reforms and enterprises, all of which are of modern date, the laity find abundant food for thought, motive for effort, and channels for benevolence. The effect upon sister Churches has been most invigorating. The Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Congregational branches of the Church were never more flourishing in this country than now. Their aggressive power, especially in Western cities and towns, is such as should not only provoke Methodists to emulation, but excite in them the greatest caution, lest, by apathy, they permit others to enter into their labors, to supplant them in their position. Are they not doing this in not a few localities?

## CHAPTER XII.

## NURSING THE YOUNG CONVERT.

A DISPROPORTION BETWEEN CONVERSIONS RECORDED AND ULTIMATE RESULTS — INCREASE IN THE MEMBERSHIP IN THE YEARS 1854-5 NOT FLATTERING — MORE IMPORTANT TO TAKE CARE OF WHAT WE HAVE, THAN TO SECURE MORE AT THE NEGLECT OF THAT — THE YOUNG CONVERT MUST BE INSTRUCTED — KIND OF INSTRUCTION NEEDED — THE HELP PROVIDED FOR THE PASTOR — THE CLASS-LEADER — OUR CHURCH LITERATURE — NECESSITY OF CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION — THE EXAMPLE OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH — OUR INCREASED FACILITIES FOR NURSING THE YOUNG CONVERT — LOSS TO THE ANCIENT CHURCH FOR THE WANT OF THE PRESS — THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE POPE — NECESSITY OF SPREADING OUR BOOKS — THE YOUNG CONVERT TO BE AT ONCE SUPPLIED — IMPORTANCE OF THE RELIGIOUS WEEKLY — RELATION OF RELIGIOUS READING TO REVELATION — THE BIBLE ALWAYS TO PRECEDE, BUT NEVER SUPERSEDE THE CONSECRATED TONGUE AND PEN.

“TILL I come, give attendance to reading.” The theme of the present chapter is the relation of the young convert to our religious literature. This, in these days, must be introduced as an auxiliary to pastoral, verbal, and catechetical training. It must constitute the pabulum of the babe in Christ. We the more readily offer some thoughts upon this theme, in view of some important facts in our late history. During the years

1854-5, the columns of our Advocates were resonant with revival shouts. We rejoiced to be privileged to read of the conversion of many hundreds, and we felt, until the General Minutes came out, that the Methodist Episcopal Church, numerically, had taken a hopeful stride onward. The showing of the General Minutes disappointed us, and we read of a decrease, in fourteen conferences, of three thousand seven hundred and forty. To be sure, emigration mainly accounted for this fact. But still, the aggregate increase, sixteen thousand and seventy-three (two and one third per cent.) disappointed us. Among these sixteen thousand increase, were to be counted the conversion of several thousand in the Sabbath school, and also the addition of several thousand by letter, from England, Ireland, and Canada, leaving quite too small a showing as the result of revival effort. We numbered Israel, at the close of last year, with no fearful or croaking spirit, and yet we felt that, so far as we had sent out our influence in favor of revivals, we had proved, emphatically, an unprofitable servant. And while we first examined ourselves to see what was wrong at home, as we think every minister should do, in pondering a great question of Church progress and responsibility,

we felt that something was wrong, and that the wrong was, probably, wide-spread. Had there not been a want of proper nursing extended to the young convert? And in what did this defect consist? Every one, perhaps, will agree with us, that the principal work of the pastor, with the young convert, commences after his conversion and admission to the Church. So important has our Church ever regarded instruction of this kind, that she has provided the pastor a number of subordinate helps in the class-leaders. That the pastor *can* be much with the convert in person, and instruct him; find out his difficulties, strengthen him against temptation, and encourage him to renewed effort, every one knows to be generally impracticable. What, then, besides the stated instruction of the pulpit, and the application of these lessons by the faithful leader in the class-room, comes in, most efficiently, to supply this lack of service? We unhesitatingly answer, OUR BOOKS AND PERIODICALS.

In far the larger number of cases, religious reading is essential to make up the complement of that happy combination of moral and religious influences that should be ever kept, like a life-infusing atmosphere, about the young convert.

We fear this arm of our strength has not been duly appreciated. We fear that the practice of the primitive Church has not been pleaded in example, here, as it ought to have been. He has read Church history to very little purpose, who fails to remember, that, in the early periods of the Church, when the wondrous press, which multiplies its tongues at will, and speaks to many millions in the same minute, was unknown, that the catechising of the young convert, the initiating of him into the doctrine of the Gospel, and order of the Church, occupied far the larger portion of the pastor's time. Hence it was that the young converts, for many centuries, were called catechumens, or, pupils of the Gospel. Would that our young converts were induced to become students of the Gospel at once! Would that more prompt efforts were made to awaken thought, and thus wed the young convert to the Church by adding this tie to the fervors of a first love! What the ancient pastors were wont to do, verbally, for the want of it, modern pastors may now do by the printed page. Look over our extended catalogue of book, tract, and Sabbath-school publications; recommend, also, with no less zeal, some one of our weekly sheets, for in all will be found, for every man, exhaustless

stores of "meat in due season." With the wholesome and strong-textured government of the primitive Church, with the requirements which it laid upon the man mental, as well as the man spiritual, we have often thought, that the primitive fathers would have kept the gates of hell from prevailing against the Church, nine tenths more than they succeeded in doing, had they but been favored with the facilities of the modern press. Their programme was right, but they failed for the want of means to carry it out. They were without the means of unitizing thought, and this was weakness; they were without the means of perpetuating thought, and this was poverty, always rendering them new beginners. They were without the means of spreading thought, commensurate with the outside pressure from the all-surrounding darkness. Ignorance begat superstition, and superstition begat the pope. Like the old flood of Noah, the consequences that followed have left their traces of moral ruin everywhere upon the face of the earth. After miracles ceased, and inspiration returned to its home in heaven, the pulpit seemed without ability to hold its place of purity and power among mankind. This, brethren, is the age of the press, and *the*

work of the Church is to consecrate that press. The Church has provided for your young converts the unobtrusive, and yet fascinating, the silent, but yet eloquent, catechist. It visits him with but trifling expense; it asks no place in his bed nor at his board; it lays no tax upon his hospitalities, and yet, when its mouth is opened, it teaches him, without the possibility of being misunderstood, those lessons of caution and love, of ethics and of doctrine, of discipline and of duty, without a knowledge of which, early imparted, many will be sick and weakly among us, others draw back, and some to perdition. Dear brethren, place our books in the hands of the young convert, with the injunction of Paul to Timothy, "Give thyself to reading till I come."

Especially in the periodical form should our Church literature be commended, and urged upon our young converts. In this age of newspapers, every interest has its organ. The peddler of some newly-invented peat-bog pill must needs issue a newspaper, and organize, by its power, his circle of friends, to make Brandreth the pill-monger, Brandreth the millionaire. This use, or misuse of the press has become so customary, that it amounts to a social law, to an order of things. "Shall the children of this

world be wiser than the children of light?" Can we expect the young convert to feel a lively interest in that numerous and far-extended brotherhood, to which he is an additional brother, if he be ignorant of her history and her achievements? The Church must be known to be loved, and the heart of Methodism is made to beat weekly against the heart of the young convert by means of the religious sheet. Among the twenty-five hundred young converts, whose translation from darkness to light, and admission into the bosom of our Zion, how many new subscribers ought we to expect for our papers? We were told the other day, by a German presiding elder, that one of the matter-of-course things always attended to whenever they receive a new member into the Church, is then and there "*to urge him to take the 'Apologist.'*" If not in form, in fact we consider the example a noble one, and full worthy of imitation by our brethren, who are now enjoying such blessed revival visitations. Who doubts but there is a conservative power, ay, a sanctifying power, in such a course, that will tell favorably upon our statistics of increase. It is one thing to be instrumental in the sinner's conversion, and record it in our revival notices, to the glory of God, and

another thing, and no less a work, to keep the sinner converted, and develop his susceptibilities of Christian character “into the fullness of the stature of a man in Christ Jesus.”

But some may be ready to accuse us of overrating the importance of merely uninspired religious reading—of exalting the servant above his Lord—the book above *the* Bible. By no means. We are only introducing the true mission of the herald, the John the Baptist, to prepare the way. We grossly err in supposing that even the Bible will be read, by even young converts, in preference to some religious literature in another form. To suppose this is to err as greatly as to suppose that the unconverted will read the Bible sooner than hear preaching. And as experience demonstrates the truth in the latter case, so, very limited observation will demonstrate it in the former. But why has preaching been instituted? Why, for the purpose of adapting the truth to man’s capabilities certainly, and so simplifying it, and mixing it with the facts and experiences of the present, that it more readily coalesces with the thoughts of the hearers, and proves the “power of God unto salvation.” Precisely so with the religious book. It is preaching to the eye,

while the living voice preaches to the ear. But how can we exalt uninspired religious reading above the Bible, when, as we now assume, if it be the kind of religious reading needed, it perfectly accords with the Bible? It would not be religious reading if it did not defer to the Bible as the rule, and only rule of our faith and practice. The moon would cease to be the moon did she cease to reflect, though attempering them in the process, the rays of the sun. But what is the true relation of the consecrated page to holy writ? An illustration may help us to a clearer and more extended conception. The Bible is a volume full of great first truths in morals and doctrines, history and duty. But these truths but rarely lie within its sacred inclosures under any system of classification, while the concrete of these truths—concrete is the embodiment of the abstract, as seen in the acts of men—is illustrated by example in a widely different manner. Truth, in the Bible, lies like the precious ore in the bosom of the mountain. It is there in inexhaustible stores. But, comparatively speaking, only now and then is this ore to be found quarried, and smelted, and ready for use. Well, now, what relation does the preacher or the pious pen sustain to this

massive mine? It is to quarry, and smelt, and prepare its precious boon for the readier reception of others. But let there be no monopoly of mining. That the priests only can understand and interpret the Bible, is one of the giant lies of papacy. Let every man quarry and smelt for himself. Let not the young convert neglect the Bible for a moment, because, in his first introduction to it, he may find many things "hard to be understood." He will also find many things easy to be understood, and the products of the pens of the wise and the good will help him to wade, with the intrepidity of the angelled prophet, far into the depths of the river of life. "And he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles: again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass over; for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over." What the angel visitant, with his measuring line, was to the prophet Ezekiel, the living teacher and the printed teacher are to the sinner and to the young

convert. The Bible, in the work of reform, conversion, and development, was never designed to supersede the anointed, holy tongue, and the consecrated pen. Brethren, do we duly appreciate the evidently heaven-ordained mission of the latter no less than the former?

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE POWER OF KINDNESS.

WHAT CHRISTIAN KINDNESS IS NOT—CHRISTIAN KINDNESS DEFINED—ERRONEOUS VIEWS CORRECTED—THE ESTHETIC ELEMENT OF KINDNESS—THE POWER OF KINDNESS ILLUSTRATED—RELATION OF KINDNESS TO GOOD MANNERS—KINDNESS AS A REVIVAL ELEMENT—CONSTITUTES A WANT OF THE CHURCH—KINDNESS A TEST OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” It is a Scriptural principle, then, that it is *not* always possible to live peaceably with all men. Differences of opinion, inducing pungent resistance in argument, occurred even among inspired apostles. Paul “withstood Peter to his face, because he was to be blamed.” Perfect non-resistance on all occasions when right is at the risk, or character hazarded, is but mawkish piety, the straining of a virtue beyond its natural bounds, until it ceases to be a virtue. In such persons, all positiveness, all aggressiveness of character is sacrificed. Self-defense is by no means to be confounded with “rendering evil for evil.” The cause of innocence and truth may require such

defense, even if their assailter should be made the sufferer by it. By kindness, then, we do not mean that insipid, affected, and water-gruel sentimentality that fears the ill-will of the sinner more than it desires and burns to rebuke the sin; and apologizes with the waft of a white handkerchief, cologned for the occasion, for portraying in Scripture language that outer darkness and hell of fire and brimstone which are the terminus of the sinner's course. Nor do we mean that wishy-washy piety that talks much of persecution, of suffering in silence, and claims that it is its duty to do no more than throw up its hands in prayer for its enemies, whatever dastard tattler, insidious whisperer, or open calumniator may undertake to inflict, in the indulgence of a morbid appetite, upon its reputation. Nor does it care to busy itself to chase down every latest edition of a lie. Christian kindness is a masculine virtue. It is strong to bear the infirmities of the weak, but equally prompt to defend the right, when assailed in its own person or otherwise. Its controlling power is love, and not fear. And it is always more ready to resent injury done to innocence, or to repel a thrust at truth, than to count the cost—weigh the consequences. And yet it is not rash. It

always makes haste slowly. It is always in haste, but never in a hurry. "It doth not behave itself unseemly." There is a morally esthetic beauty about it, to which we give the name of courtesy. This virtue leavens the administration of its rebukes, and makes them admired, even where they are repulsed; but not wholly repulsed. An appreciation of the fitting and a love of the beautiful are primary sentiments in the mind. And the man who differs with me in kindness, and points to the Delilah of my ruin, has begotten a species of conviction, even in spite of my most obstinate opposition. There are those among Christians, and even Christian ministers, who contend that they can do nothing with some, without making them mad. Such persons are, certainly, rare exceptions to the power of kindness, and we think kindness itself demands they should never be mentioned. This is a dangerous doctrine, and very full of mischief.

True kindness must be inbred. It is the fruit of grace, under the husbandry of self-discipline. Some temperaments are vastly better adapted to the development and exercise of this virtue than others. But no temperament is so perverse, no constitutional peculiarities too obsti-

nate to be overcome. And we should plead their existence in Christian character, as an apology for rashness, rudeness, acerbity of spirit, harshness of speech, and carelessly-chosen words, with great hesitancy. If the grace of God will not induce us to treat each other kindly, either it has failed in its efficacy, or we have mistaken something else for its efficacy. The world expects Christians to be kind one to another, and will detect a departure in speech, spirit, or act, with preëminent readiness and precision. "Be kindly affectioned one to another, in honor preferring one another." No chord of the human heart has lost less its sensitiveness, by man's lapse from Eden purity, than that which awakens to the touch of kindness. Her gentlest breath inspires it with song, while an opposite look or gesture becomes electrical, and equally causes it to vibrate, but with pain, pity, or with hate. There is a vast, diffusive, conservative, and controlling power in kindness. The every-day social illustrations of this are so familiar, as to become self-suggestive. But does an emergency arise? Are the elements of strife abroad, and waking the social waters into fury and foam, like the winds of the great ocean? Conceive we of such a state of things in a deliberative

body, a church meeting, etc.? Watch yonder the man who has an “excellent spirit within him,” the man who has studied kindness by keeping himself in the love of God, and who has attired himself in her beautiful robes, by studying the laws of courtesy, whose acts are replete with gentleness, as the zephyrs, and little eddying winds, prophets of the coming storm, but whose firmness without obstinacy, and whose independence without egotism, are as strong as that storm; show us that man, and it may scarcely be deemed desecration to compare his control in that body, other things being equal, to the “Peace, be still,” once uttered over tempestuous Galilee. The kind man, especially the kind Christian, carries with him—be his talent indeed humble—an atmosphere of force and sweet impressiveness wherever he goes. Kindness is not “good manners,” technically speaking. He may be wholly ignorant of the canons of Chesterfield, and the programme of Count d’Orsay. Uninitiated into the school of fashionable etiquette, he may have read or heard nothing, systematically, upon that subject, more than what is found in the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians. But like the flower of the wilderness, kindness sheds as sweet an

odor upon a cabin hearth, with its rude attire, scanty vocabulary, and frugal fare, as the rose that blooms upon the walls of mural palaces. Kindness extemporizes an etiquette for itself, and becomes a “stroke of nature that makes all men kin.” Not that it seeks an individualism of manner, or glories in personal eccentricities, partly natural and partly affected. Nor does it disclaim many of what are called the laws of good manners. It becomes no oddity in the social circle, to the level of which it may have been raised by taste and talent. Contrariwise, the most approved manners of the refined gentleman soon become, by study and acquisition, the most approved etiquette of the Christian, but especially of the Christian minister. And in this the kind-hearted Christian always has the advantage, for if Christian kindness be not the body of refined manners, it is much more, it is the soul of that body. A high state of Christian civilization, without such refinement of manner as sphere in life, capacity, and education would call for, all must acknowledge to be a solecism. Kindness, then, is the art of pleasing, practiced by a heart that has become graciously kind and charitable under the influence of grace and the illuminations of the Bible. But to please a man is to

win his confidence. It imperceptibly sways him in our favor, and in favor of the opinions we advance. "Let every one of us please his brother, for his good to edification."

When we commenced to develop, as we have done above, this essential element of power in the winning of souls, we had designed to trace in our pulpit, and in our press and social life, what we deem departures from the law of kindness. Our remarks have become so extended as to forbid this in the present chapter, and never did we more readily permit an application to take care of itself. We think the principles we have enumerated will readily suggest to our readers many, at least, of those practical lessons of which they are so replete. Will they especially consider the power of kindness in its application to the promotion of revivals, and the husbandry of their blessed fruits? It is an element of power that should be confined to no department of the Church. It should extend from the highest functionary to the last converted infant in the Sabbath school, whose limping lisps and dewy eye "perfect the praise of Jesus." As far as any single grace, or combination of graces, for such it is, involve the interests of our Church in practice, the want of being kindly

affectioned one toward another may be pronounced a great WANT OF OUR ZION. Thank God, we speak not despairingly. The present blessed, and almost universal revival visitation, has greatly increased the prevalence of brotherly love. It is not our province nor our privilege to mingle much with the "little flock" who are to inherit the "kingdom;" but it is to see many of our ambassadors for Christ, (and hear from hundreds more,) who shaking us with unwonted warmness by the hand, refer to the revival columns of our Advocates, with glowing emphasis, as the common weekly band-meeting of the whole Church, who sympathize in sentiment, and seem especially urged to the practice of the apostle's injunction: "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise, blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love his life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile."

"See how these Christians love," has often been an argument before which infidelity has withered and vanished, like the fabled upas

upon the brink of an active volcano. Dear brethren, let us pause, ponder, and pray over the emphasis which we are to place upon this "*how*," with reference to the state of our own cherished Methodism.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### INFRACTIONS OF THE LAW OF KINDNESS CONSIDERED.

LAW OF KINDNESS VIOLATED IN SPIRIT — THE PULPIT SCOLD — THE ACID REVIVALIST — RESULTS OF SUCH REVIVALS — THE RELATION OF THE TONES OF THE VOICE TO KINDNESS — ANECDOTE OF WHITEFIELD — VOICE OF THE PREACHER IN THE PULPIT — ANECDOTE OF THE LITTLE GIRL — IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT TOO LITTLE REALIZED — WORDS UNFITLY SPOKEN — PERSONALITIES IN DEBATE — AN APOLOGY FOR THEIR PREVALENCE — THE OLD WRITERS — THE YOUNG WRITERS — REFORM NEEDED.

WE spoke in the last chapter of the power of kindness as a potent element in the work of winning souls, keeping them wedded to our holy altars, and nurturing them for the skies. We promised, by way of illustration and warning, to point out what we regarded as some of the departures from the law of kindness.

The law of kindness may be violated in *spirit*. By the spirit of a man we now mean those social, intellectual, and moral impressions, which, either as a writer, preacher, or private companion, he makes upon us, and which are more or less agreeable to us, and which we so readily feel to

be in accordance with candor, truth, goodness, and charity, or their opposites. A right act may be done in a wrong spirit. The spirit in which men say and do things is, in fact, one of the great powers of life in the promotion of good or ill. A good act done in a bad spirit, might often better not have been done. A sermon preached in the spirit of the scold, had, we believe, generally, better have remained unpreached. There are those who pique themselves on what they call "whipping the Church into the harness," and all this under the shield of that great truth in the work of revivals, that the Church must first be set right. Nor is it to be denied that some successful revivalists are greatly given to a censorious, denunciating, dogmatical, harsh, and acid mode of presenting the truth. We have often heard them, in their preliminary lectures, picking out what they called the sins of Church members, as if they had brought the Church to judgment, *ex cathedra*, and then, in a seemingly commingled spirit of harshness, egotism, and self-satisfaction, they decided upon each one's fate. We have said that such preaching is not always wanting in marked success. And here let it be borne in mind, that we have long settled it as a fact in the economy

of God's grace, that sermons often quite as deficient in the right spirit, as a sermon well could be in intellectual merit, is often made the means of great good. We are not speaking, then, of a style of preaching that does *no* good, but of one which always fails seriously of doing the *greatest* good. A revival, originated and matured under the type of pulpit labor which we have here so imperfectly described, is very apt to be wanting in deepness of earth. In all revivals, the spirit of the preacher is preëminently catching, and if he be given to censoriousness, denunciation, and a right-angled—sometimes acute—spirit, this same spirit will take possession of the Church and the young converts. And when the rains come, and the winds blow upon such a moral structure, if it do not always all fall, we have always noticed a great falling away. Every zealous member and young convert must needs be as urgent, extreme, and peremptory in his demands upon a brother, or the sinner he would reform, as was his late spiritual model. But, in such cases, resistance follows, feelings are hurt, heart-burnings occur, and the further consequences need not be detailed. We maintain, that in this case there is a sad departure in spirit from that law of kindness described in our last chapter.

The law of kindness may be violated in the *tones of the voice*. This, perhaps, is often accidental. In the former case, the importance of the subject may have been never considered. Bad practices may have become chronic, by time and the power of habit. Not a few, however, are to be found who seem to delight in a gruff, surly, and austere-toned address. There is no power in nature more mysterious, none that operates with greater certainty, than that of the innumerable intonations of which the human voice is capable. In a tone, grief becomes irresistibly eloquent, hate suggests the deadly poison of the dreaded basilisk, love unmans, and beauty transports. It is not the *words* of the mother, for many long months, that make her babe feel that the heart of love is its cradle, and the lessons of discipline its lot. "Not so much what my mother said to me, as the *way* she said it," was once remarked to the writer by a despairing young man, who had sadly strayed from the precepts of the parental roof. "O," said he, as the great tears coursed down his cheeks, "the *way* my mother said that last thing to me! The tones of her voice murmur this moment in my ear!" Is there, then, no moral power in the tone of a word? As well deny to

music its charms, to the rose its odor, to the sky its beauty. Without insisting upon the study of any of those systems of art, calculated to put the human voice right, here we will say, that this is a subject well worthy of consideration—a subject demanding attention, even by private Christians, where none is often thought necessary; while, as it respects the Christian minister or teacher, it is one that should be studied as of no secondary importance. Says Whitefield, “I carefully sought out those acceptable tones that won like a spell upon the heart, even when the words were unremembered.” So wonderfully modulated was his voice, that Garrick said, “he could make men either laugh or cry, by pronouncing the word Mesopotamia.”

“ His words, they had so sweet a flow,  
And spoke the truth so richly well,  
They fell like heaven’s serenest snow,  
And all was brightness where they fell.”

The power which appropriate intonations have upon our own moral emotions, and the influence, again, which these moral emotions have to produce thought, should suggest a valuable lesson to every Christian minister. The man who is always talking gruffly, and in harsh tones, may think strongly, but he will think roughly.

Like the picture of the artist, which becomes more accurate and mellowed by age, so the sound of one's own voice is an imperceptible educator of his taste. Much of the harshness of tone of which we are now speaking, and which vacillates between the scold and hoarseness, undoubtedly arises from that common fault of the pulpit of pitching the voice at once on one key, and keeping it there, only with increased or diminished percussion, through an entire discourse. The preacher who corrects this fault by the study of elocution, does vastly more than to achieve an important intellectual victory. He increases mightily his power of persuasiveness. He studies the elocution of moral emotions. He learns to speak *kindly* in public. There might have been the absence of all unkindness before. But now there is the presence of that potent charm. We appeal to the experience of brethren. How often have we regretted, even while preaching, that our voice was so little in harmony with what we really felt and desired to teach. "Ma," said the little girl to her mother, on returning from church, "I like our preacher when he comes to see us, but I don't like to hear him preach." On being asked why, the response was, "His preaching

sounded like scolding all the time." Here we are speaking of sacrificing the power of kindness, where the fault, perhaps, is more a misfortune than a fault. But let no one treat these suggestions lightly. Daily experience demonstrates their value. Least of all, let no one dismiss the subject with the mere truism: "Be natural, and your voice will always be right." If such teaching would have reformed these faults, but few charges of the kind would lay against the pulpit to-day. It is, in fact, simply begging the question, which is, What is it to be natural? Man has no natural gifts which are perfected by instinct. All the excellence of any gift which he possesses, is attributable essentially to art and education.

The law of kindness is often infracted by an indiscreet use of *words* and *phrases*, proper enough in themselves and in the proper time. How often do we meet with religious teachers, from the pulpit to the exhorter, that seem to claim that, because Christ called people hypocrites on a most appropriate occasion, they are to employ the same epithet on almost any occasion. And because whitened walls, sepulchers, vipers, spoilers of widows' houses, etc., were employed by Christ but once, perhaps, in a minis-

try of three years, these same epithets are to dance through half their discourses. And, as to the "terrors of the law," strange and magniloquent descriptions of the state of the lost, why it would seem if they were to learn moderation on these subjects they would, indeed, be robbed of all their thunder. "Pa," said the little boy, "didn't the preacher swear though to-day? was he mad?" Let every one such go and learn what this text meaneth: "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." This style of preaching and exhorting, though not so intended, fails to cherish the power of kindness.

But worse than all that we have yet said, does the law of kindness suffer among us when *controversial intercourse* arises. Lamentably true has this been of our press, numerous and largely in the majority as are many of the noble examples to the contrary. We do not say that our writers are wanting in manliness or in magnanimity, any more than they are in ability. At least, the exceptions are exceptions. But it is only due to truth to say, humiliating as is the confession, that rarely do two Methodist preachers meet in discussion, in the columns of a newspaper, without some sacrifice of mutual good feel-

ing, and a manifest disposition, before they close, to digress from the subject they are dissecting, and by way of episode thrust sharply at each other's real or fancied weaknesses. Here, what we are wont to call "personalities" arise. While we can offer no apology for this, further than that of the weakness of our common humanity, we may say, that there is a reason extending far back in our history that has tended largely and imperceptibly to produce this state of things. For several generations of our itinerants, in different localities, they had to contend inch by inch for the ground which they gained ; contend with the ministry of other sects, who looked upon Methodists as ignorant interlopers ; not subjects of argument, but fit subjects only for ridicule. These opponents could appreciate no pay but in their own kind. The fool must needs be answered according to his folly ; and scarcely less prepared was society to appreciate argument destitute of this appendage. It has always been unfortunate for the kindness and etiquette of debate, where sect has been incessantly grappling with sect. Man's religious prejudices are the strongest of his nature, and where an honest preference first degenerates into prejudice, and this again into bigotry, there is no bitterness of

opposition or expression of which the heart fails to become a fountain.

But, after conquering a peace with our neighbors, and becoming ourselves organized and extended, our papers becoming established as a medium of intercourse, and questions of order, discipline, policy, etc., arising among ourselves for discussion, too much of the same polemical spirit and system of tactics prevailed among ourselves. We but register here what we believe to be a fact, and do it with profound regret, that the oldest habitual and most useful writers among us now, are not the least addicted to the very fault which we are considering; and, at the same time that we venerate that class of men, we feel that there is an apology for this weakness in them that never ought to be pleaded by their juniors. It is much to be regretted that many of the rising generation of writers are given to imitate the weaknesses of our seniors, without being able to imitate their strength. Reform, reform, must be prosecuted in our current periodical literature. "If the man that wrote that is a preacher," said a young convert, on reading an article in one of the *Advocates* the other day, "I don't want to hear him preach until he is converted over again. He writes as

if he had no religion." How awfully suggestive the remark, when what the hand puts on paper may chance to be a living epistle, read and known of all men until the judgment! How true, also, to the Bible was the sentiment of this young brother! "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in the darkness until now." Brethren, have we forgotten that our "words do eat as doth a canker?" and that it is the "soft answer that turneth away wrath?"

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE LAW OF FORGIVENESS.

REVENGE ALWAYS A VICE — ANECDOTE OF COL. GARDINER — REVENGE PERPETUATES, BUT FORGIVENESS EXTERMINATES WRONG — REACTING POWER OF REVENGE — SMALL RESENTMENTS SINFUL — THE FACT ILLUSTRATED — LEGAL PUNISHMENT OF CRIMINALS NOT REVENGE — SUGGESTIVE PRINCIPLES — FORGIVENESS AND MERCY — FORGIVENESS ESSENTIAL TO REVIVALS — SOLEMNITY OF THE SUBJECT.

THE Gospel absolutely forbids every form of revenge. And yet, with a heart uncontrolled by grace, this is one of the strongest natural impulses of our depravity. To perfectly shun this sin, requires a steady perseverance in self-denial, as rare, we fear, as it is ennobling and elevating in the Christian character. No man was ever a great man, not to say a good one, who could not afford to forgive an enemy, to overcome evil with good. The pious Col. Gardiner was once insufferably insulted by a rash upstart of an inferior officer. Though his sword hung by his side, with steady nerve and dignified meekness, he drew his handkerchief from his pocket, and wiped the spittle from his face, remarking,

“Young man, could I wipe thy blood from my conscience as easily as I can wipe thy foul saliva from my face, I had killed thee in a moment.” At first, his friends poured contempt upon his rigid Christian principles, but when they saw the young man trembling and sneaking away to write an apology, they felt that they were in the presence of a transforming greatness, heavenly and sublime. Revenge perpetuates the very evil which it seeks to cure, while forgiveness alone puts a stop to its ravages. How strikingly is this illustrated in the life of the savage, where no less than deadly revenge for injuries is ever thought of. A family feud may boil for centuries, until the two tribes, under their respective chieftains, may both become swallowed up in the fiery maelstrom of revenge. In civilized life, revenge may assume types less savage, but not less deadly in its hate, and scarcely less fatal in its effects. The man who pursues revenge, is pursuing a fiery flying serpent over deserts barren of the emblems of affection and hope, and whatever the consequences to his victim, that serpent will finally return and nestle in his own bosom. The eternal law of God can no more be violated with impunity, than could one leap from a precipice, expecting that the

laws of gravity would be suspended for his safe descent. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive yours."

And here we would observe, let no one presume that the law of forgiveness may not be violated as certainly by the little as by the much. A brother may have provoked me to retaliation in a matter seemingly trivial, and I seek the first opportunity for retribution, "to be up with him." I may be successful in my attempts. The occurrence may be forgotten, and yet in my future intercourse with that brother, our passage-at-arms is almost sure to have a resurrection. It is literally true that we forgive, but do not forget. Reciprocal revenge is almost sure to make brethren surround themselves, like the harbor of some cities, with invisible chevaux-de-frise. Now had I forborne taking revenge, I would have occupied a vantage ground over this brother. My kindness would have disarmed him, and my example duplicated itself.

Not only is revenge so strongly instinctive to depravity, but, like the Eden tempter, it compounds its subtle lotion; it assumes as many forms as the fabled Proteus. It is felt to be sweet.

We sometimes reason ourselves into its justice. It is often thought to be necessary to reform an offender. Let the student of Christian ethics carefully scrutinize, in the light of the Gospel, these false maxims. "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee." The protection of society requires the legal infliction of punishment upon the offender. But this is not revenge. It is justice. By such proceedings the sum of human sufferings is lessened. "Much better that one suffer than many." So, also, there are circumstances where personal injury must needs be inflicted, in obedience to the law of self-preservation. I awake and smite the burglar to death, who, with hand upon the throat, is seeking my life. The deed is neither revenge nor murder. Nor am I to be accused of inflicting injuries, though he should prove to be my next-door neighbor, and, like the extraordinary Webster case, in Boston, a lovely and innocent family experience that life forever is shrouded in gloom. Nothing should be esteemed more sacred to one than his reputation, and if I become the victim of slander, and nothing can save my reputation but the exposure

of the character of a witness, this also is not revenge. But no limit but an impossibility should be put to our exertions to live peaceably with all men, whether they will reciprocate the effort or not. “If it be *possible*, as much as in you lieth, live peaceably with all men.”

In accordance with the last-named principle, we are not to wait for the brother who is the first offender, to first propose terms of reconciliation, but we are to admonish him of his duty, and affectionately urge upon him an interview, and thus seek to be reconciled to our brother. So sacred is this duty, that it seems almost to take precedence of prayer. “If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” “If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”

In the above, we have but announced principles, and pointed them with their proof texts. If they suggest to our readers the same lessons that they do to us, they will lay them low at the foot of the cross, exclaiming, “Who, then, can be saved?” Like David, they will ejaculate, “The

arrows of the Almighty stick fast within me." Alas! who of us are not guilty of revenge? at least, of that mitigated and gentler form called retaliation? If we refuse to forgive a brother who repents, even for times innumerable, we cherish the spirit of revenge. "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven." If we refuse to seek to be reconciled to a brother, who may have been the first aggressor in the offense, we are guilty of revenge, and have no claim upon Divine forgiveness until we repent. Surely the Spirit of eternal truth here searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, and pierceth to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. Opposed as are these requirements to the natural heart, with God nothing is impossible. Grace strengthening us, we can, thank God, tower above the littleness of doing wrong, because a brother, in some forgetful or wayward moment, has sought to inflict upon us wrong.

There is a majesty in forgiveness which always elevates the sufferer above the offender. In no act does man more imitate his blessed Maker.

“If any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” Here, forgiveness is nearly synonymous with that sweet word, mercy, of which the great poet of nature has thus truthfully spoken:

“The quality of mercy is not strained;  
It droppeth as the gentle dew from heaven  
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blessed;  
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes;  
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown.”

With a good man, the occasion of forgiveness becomes a feast to his conscience, and the force of his example restrains men before him, and purifies the moral atmosphere about him. He was smitten, but, like the sandal-tree, which the ax-man refuses to spare, it perfumes the air with frankincense from its wounds.

The importance of forgiveness among brethren, of loving each other as little children, in the great work of revivals, needs, here, no more than the naming. *No Church is ready for a revival until its membership are living in peace with each other.* Old quarrels, grudges, jealousies, bickerings, mutual suspicions, envyings, and strife, must be rolled from the bosom of the Church, just where Christian, in Bunyan, lost his burden.

And, as it respects the fruits of a revival, they should be preserved at once from the dry-rot of revenge. Young converts should be carefully taught the law of mutual forbearance and forgiveness. The luxuries of peace, the omnipotence of union among ourselves, and the God-conferred title of the peacemaker, should never be lost sight of. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." The young convert should be taught never to lose sight of the manners of the angels, the etiquette of heaven. Angels will not bandy epithets of reproach, even with Satan himself. "Michael the archangel, when, contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." That clause in the Lord's prayer, "Forgive our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us," should never be repeated but with a feeling of consciousness that we love our enemies, and are willing to do good to those who despitefully use us. But, like Moses before the bush, we pause upon this holy ground to unsandal our feet; and, like Habakkuk, before his terrible vision of the great God, which overwhelmed him with confusion, and a sense of self-annihilation, we can

do no more than say, "*O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years; in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.*"

## CHAPTER XVI.

## PIETY THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH.

A WORD TO THE PREACHER — THE LIFE OR DEATH OF A CHURCH TO BE TESTED BY HER PIETY — A PHOSPHORESCENT CHURCH LIFE — ELEMENTS OF PIETY TREATED OF — ABSURDITY OF DISBELIEF IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF PIETY — SPIRITUALITY OF THE HEART ONLY CERTAINLY KNOWN BY ITS FRUITS — TEMPERAS AS A TEST OF SPIRITUALITY — CONDUCT AND CREED AS PROOFS OF SPIRITUALITY — IMPORTANCE OF HOLY TEMPERAS.

BROTHER minister in the glorious work of revivals, even at the risk of some repetition, we wish to press some thoughts further, which may be appropriately arranged under the above caption. They may suggest to you an appropriate pulpit theme, and thus aid you in the great and only work to which you so readily subordinate all work, the work of saving perishing souls.

Piety, that shall be the rule, and not the exception; a pious pulpit; a pious officiary; pious fathers, and mothers, and children; three quarters of a million of Methodists, generally, if not universally pious! Who could calculate the efficacy of such leaven in the three measures of meal; of such salt for a corrupted earth; of such

a great light in a dark world? Piety is the only principle of Church life that makes the existence of that Church conservative and regenerative in its effects. It is, in fact, the only life that distinguishes a live from a dead Church. A dead Church may shine by its doctrines and by its learning; but this light is phosphorescent, and only decoys to sloughs of deeper, though it may be more refined sensuality.

We will speak of piety as it respects its spirituality, its intelligence, motives, and individuality. As it respects its spirituality, God is a spirit, and acceptable worship can only be rendered him in the spirit. The fact of the Spirit's presence in religion, though incomprehensible as to manner, is quite comprehensible as to the fact. It is a fact of revelation, and has its home no more in mystery, than a thousand daily familiar facts of nature. Any number of examples will here suggest themselves to the thoughtful. Analogy speaks out in favor of the same great truth. If the Spirit of God garnish the heavens; if it operate, with or without means, on gross and insensible matter, moving this great universe on its rounds of harmony and grandeur, as the body is moved by the soul, is it unreasonable to suppose that the souls of men,

God's offspring, may be quite sensible to the Spirit's touch, voice, and teachings? Does the great heart of boundless goodness throb up against an inanimate clod, and yet, between that heart and an infinitely higher order of existence, does there exist an impassable gulf, a terrible vacuum? Is the society of man, that embraces humanity in one brotherhood, and that sweeps into another world, and includes, also, its unseen population, to end this side of society with our Maker? The affirmative of the thought is an aggravation of the crudities and cruelties of atheism. Such a view unhearts Christianity, and leaves it a mere carcass, to be ever and anon galvanized into mimic life, by the fervors of fashion or poetry, superstition or sentimentality. Thank God, revelation here stands boldly out. It pleads, first of all, the sinner's sensible communion with God, through Christ, by the aid of the Holy Spirit. "Christ in you, the hope of glory." "The Spirit beareth witness," etc.

But the presence of the Spirit can only safely be judged of by its fruits. And, first, these fruits commence their growth, and are seen in the moral dispositions of men, far more, even, than in the rectitude of their conduct; and, certainly, far more than in the soundness of their

judgments, or harmony of their views on questions of casuistry, ethics, and doctrine. The latter have to do with the intelligence; the former with the moral biases and emotions of the mind. The one has reference to what a man knows; the other to the purity of his heart. The heart can alone be made pure by the Spirit. This purity the Spirit imparts to even the weakest in wisdom, the wayfaring man, though a fool. The latter deeds are to be learned by efforts of the disciple: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." "Search the Scriptures."

We are brought naturally to consider intelligence as an element of strength in piety. We prefer, however, to leave some thoughts upon this topic, and the others above named, until the next chapter. We close with a word upon Christian tempers as an element of power in Christian example. Here, we verily believe, is a subject of paramount importance in relation to the Church's strength and aggressiveness. The temper in which a deed is done often goes further with a witness, in making up his judgment of one's religion, than the character of the deed itself. Nothing is more manifest than this: if the dispositions and tempers of professed Christians habitually manifest themselves as the

dispositions and tempers of the world around are manifested, men will attribute to such Christians nothing but the form and shell of Christianity. Let but the flush of fretfulness or anger redden upon the cheek, or murmur in the voice of the occupant of the pulpit, at causes that should only occasion him grief, and furnish him an opportunity for the exercise of forbearance, and that man's preaching is vain. Let it be seen that anger burns as violently in the bosom of the professing and the praying, and breaks forth as readily, when it is appealed to, and the sinner will silently ask himself, "How dwelleth the love of God in that man?" Let but the pride of opinion, a mere egotism, a spirit of spite, keep one from acknowledging his errors, when he has been clearly proven in the wrong, whether these be errors of the intellect, or errors of conduct, and it is hard to believe that man's body a temple of the Holy Ghost. Let the man who would buy, and sell, and get gain, decrease in liberality as he increases in goods, and exhibit, as he improves by practice, an admirable skill at driving a bargain, and then smile triumphantly over the advantage of questionable honor which he had gained, and it will not be easy to attribute to that man a very high degree of spirituality.

Let polemic ecclesiastics practice sophistry for the sake of their cause, play upon words, and commit diversions by sarcastic quibbles, and practice proving their points by illegitimate syllogisms and false analogies ; such men will soon be suspected of being destitute of the spirit of truth, as they certainly will be suspected of being destitute of the spirit of religion. We repeat it, the heart of man can be read more readily in his tempers than in his actions. These tempers are loopholes through wooded landscapes, that exhibit the sterile background ; the heavens angry with storms, or open upon flowery lawns or fruitful fields, over which bends the sky in the deep blue of its repose and purity. Such are the relations of man's tempers and actions. And it is truly remarkable, that among the largest enumeration of the fruits of the Spirit, found in the New Testament, tempers, rather than actions, are enumerated as evidences of the spirituality of the Christian's character : "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance : against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### INTELLIGENCE AS AN ELEMENT OF PIETY.

WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE — DEFINITION OF TRUTH — WHEN KNOWLEDGE BECOMES POWER — DIFFERENCE BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM — THE KIND OF KNOWLEDGE THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD SEEK — THE BIBLE-READING CHRISTIAN — SECURITY AGAINST APOSTASY — THE BIBLE AND POPULAR LITERATURE — THE NEWSPAPER AN INTERPRETER OF THE BIBLE — CHRISTIANS AND THE PROMISES.

“I WILL give you pastors according to my heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.” “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” “In everything ye are enriched by him in all knowledge.” “Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of thy salvation.”

In offering some thoughts under this caption in the last chapter, we spoke principally of the spirituality of piety, and promised to resume this subject by offering some thoughts upon *intelligence* as an element of power, in piety, upon *motives* and *individuality*.

Of the importance of cultivating the intellect as well as the heart, in a life of piety, the Scriptures

just quoted treat most conclusively. These texts are but a brief selection from a very large class. But what is knowledge? And what the principal branches that Christians generally in private life should pursue? When one knows a thing, the simple meaning of that is, he conceives of a thing as it exists. And as truth is no more than the condition of things as they exist, such a man, as far as he goes, has a knowledge of the truth. But this truth may do him no good if he fail to appropriate it, or attempt to appropriate it wrongly, or neglect it altogether. Knowledge only becomes power by a proper use. The man who makes the running stream turn the wheel of his mill, or the wind fill the sails of his ship, must first know the laws of gravity and the course of the winds. The more skillfully this knowledge be applied to the great practical purposes of life, the more wisely are they applied. Here, then, is the general difference between the meaning of the word knowledge and wisdom as employed in the Scriptures. The one is an acquisition of truth, the other relates to the manner in which that truth is employed for the benefit of ourselves and others. A man of knowledge is not always a wise man, and the man who may be called truly wise may some-

times be very limited in knowledge. "Great men are not always wise," and the wise man is very apt to be better off than the great man; hence "with all your getting get wisdom."

But of the knowledge which the pious man should study constantly to acquire, we would not disparage a knowledge of the sciences; a knowledge of nature's great laws, which will reveal to the student so much of God, of his wisdom and his goodness. But it falls to the lot of but few Christians to be students in the technical sense of that word: far the larger mass of good people will be quite limited in scholastic attainments. It is the few only who will devote their lives to the majestic mysteries of astronomy, the wonders of chemistry, or the hidden beauties of philology. As the miner reveals the hidden treasures of earth for the rest of mankind, so these devotees of hard study constitute the few that work for the world in matters of science. All honor to them. Yet is there a common ground, which every Christian can occupy for the purpose of adding to his faith not merely virtue, that is, virtuous dispositions, holy desires, and the like, but *knowledge*. And in a hasty specification of the branches of knowledge which every Christian should pursue, we would first

name the reading of the Holy Scriptures, the reading of them carefully, humbly, fervently, and prayerfully ; all of which, with much more, is included in the phrase, “Search the Scriptures.” The critical reading of the sacred text may be left to men of learning and of leisure ; to those whose business it is thus to sift out the whole idea of the Spirit. But the daily reading of the sacred text without such helps will be found to the pious mind a perpetual repast, a well of water springing up within him unto everlasting life. He will find his Bible an Eden, without the forbidden tree ; an Eden in which the tree of life has been restored. How many saints does biography trace through life, in which the well-thumbed Bible, without note or comment, was their daily companion, and found a place under their dying pillow ! How many men, distinguished for their learning and research, does history show us expressing a regret at the sundown of life that they have read the Holy Scriptures so little ! In addition to that spiritual-mindedness which will surround the soul of the daily reader of the Holy Scriptures as does an atmosphere of fragrance the flower, such a one will never be found wanting in those intellectual qualities which constitute the intel-

ligent man. Possessing, as do the Holy Scriptures, a living freshness of truth, a perpetual adaptedness, they lead the mind to the pursuit of subordinate and cotemporaneous knowledge. A man who reads his Bible diligently will read other good books and works no less. He who searches the Scriptures will find them to be not merely a record of things past, but such a record as will prompt him to a study of the present; he will understand better, and take a deeper interest in the ministrations of the pulpit; he will be prompted to study the history, order, genius, and workings of the Church of which he is a member; he will become in that edifice a lively stone; he will find himself feeling the pressure of individual responsibility. And as the best security against apostasy is to keep Christians hard at work, he will find that his knowledge is a fundamental contribution to his stability. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall bear much fruit."

Christians in this age can scarcely be said to be seriously wanting in intelligence. It is an age of books and intelligence. God, in his providence, seems to have said, "Let there be light," and Christendom is radiant from a myriad sources. We fear, however, that Chris-

tians, in those superior mental acquisitions which constitute so largely the popular privilege of the times, do not begin to get knowledge at the right place. Begin not with the newspaper or the periodical, but with the Bible. The Bible will render both of the former necessary. And unlike the voices of the seven thunders that were sealed up, the voices of the popular press will contribute to the interpretation of the sacred text, and Providence will be seen, in prophecy, on His glorious march to the world's final rescue. O, for more Bible-reading Christians! O, for a Church which, like the pious Bereans of old, should constantly search the Scriptures, amid these stirring times, to see whether these things are so!

We fear, also, that Christians err in not appropriating the knowledge they possess as they ought, to the high purposes of duty and holy living. The man who knows the powers of the water-wheel, but refuses to appropriate them; the potency of steam, but treats it with neglect, is a dwarf in material progress; and were society generally to act upon this principle, it would soon relapse into barbarism. Christian, do you fail to apply the promises of God, with which you have been made so familiar, from the Sab-

bath school to the sacred desk, in the day of temptation? or do you refuse to feast daily upon this bread, which comes down from heaven, to drink daily at this fountain, of which if a man drink he shall never thirst? Do you fail to meditate upon those holy mysteries of our sacraments, and doctrines of our creed, which have tempted the prying inquiries of angels?

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### MOTIVES AND INDIVIDUALITY AS ELEMENTS OF PIETY.

MOTIVES—DIVIDED INTO INNOCENT AND RELIGIOUS AND BOTH—DISINTERESTED BENEVOLENCE—SINISTER MOTIVES—TWO THINGS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE DOCTRINE OF MOTIVES—THE MAN WHO HANGS OUT HIS OWN SIGN—INDIVIDUALITY—A CHARACTER FOUND IN THE WAY—REWARD PROPORTIONED TO ABILITY—ANECDOTE OF A GREAT GENERAL—THE LONDON MERCHANT—IMPORTANT LAW OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH—REVIVAL HELP-HINTS.

HAVING, in previous chapters, spoken of *spirituality* and *intelligence*, as elements of power in piety, we come now to speak of the Christian's *motives*, and of his *responsibility* or *individuality*. The doctrine of motives involves the most delicate shades of casuistry, the profoundest distinctions in Christian ethics. Much confusion of thought, and incorrect judgment of the conduct of our fellows, have been the result of not understanding when motives are innocent; when they are pious, and when they are sinful, or purely selfish. One may do me a favor simply to win my good-will. There may be nothing religious in it, and yet, at the same time, there

may be nothing wrong in it; it is an innocent motive. Another may do me a favor, both to obtain my good-will, but, first and foremost, in the needed kindness which he bestowed upon me, he sought the glory of God, and was actuated by a sense of duty to him. Here the motive, in some sense, doubled itself, and yet it was purely religious. A brother may give largely of his means for the erection of a place of worship near his own dwelling, or where such an improvement will advance the price of his lands, and he may be properly enough influenced by these motives, and yet these minor motives may be so subordinated to the higher, that they may be perfectly righteous before God. One of the most common, and, at the same time, one of the most grossly uncharitable views which we can take of the motives of our brethren, is to suppose them always selfish, whenever they seem prompted by temporal interest, though the object to be promoted is purely a righteous one. The phrase "disinterested benevolence," is only comparative in its meaning. The Almighty never designed us to do right without promoting our own interest. And he who pretends to have lost sight of this, of having become wholly insensible to it, is simply

a fanatic, as his own betrayed selfishness will soon prove.

There are purely selfish and sinful motives. Men may be stimulated to deeds of goodness, wholly from the hope of gain. They may pamper you with kindness, and load you with favors that they may the more readily make you their victim. How fearfully prominent among men are the workings of such motives! How disgusting are they to magnanimous goodness! How offensive to piety, and to that God who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins! How careful should we be to scrutinize our motives! "Thou, God, seest me," like the voice of the great sea in the shell of its shore, should dwell in our souls as a living whisper of warning.

In the doctrine of motives, then, two things should always be carefully considered. First, we should prayerfully and impartially scrutinize our own. Secondly, we should be as cautious as the foot of sensitive veneration when walking among graves, while sitting in judgment on those of others. "Judge not, that ye be not judged." The man who is always criticising the motives of others, hangs out his own sign. He speaks from experience. He may judge wrongfully of others, but others will judge rightly of him. It

is a very low view to take, of even unregenerate human nature, to suppose it incapable of being prompted to worthy deeds by motives destitute of piety, and yet these motives be in themselves innocent and honorable. But that readiness to attribute to our *brethren* sinister motives for all that they do and say, is a very unsightly grace.

By *individuality*, as an element of strength in piety, we mean, first, that all that voluntary humility or mock piety that induces one to disclaim all influence or power in matters of religion, etc., claiming that he is a mere binnacle on the old ship Zion, should be ignored and despised. It is a mere excuse for slothfulness in the vineyard of the Lord. It is not a true humility, which always elevates its possessor, but a mock lowliness, which degrades the true man, and makes the sinner in him bad-natured. In Church matters, none are more ready to dictate what should be done, than those of this very class, who claim that they cannot do anything. Than they, none are less apt to be contented with what is done. Of such persons we say, they are wanting in individuality in matters of religion. As they do nothing, they are actually worth nothing; and every brother will find them very

much in the way in the time of revivals. The latter fact, however, with all their humility, they are slow to believe. They do not stand up in the great spiritual edifice as supporting pillars, but obstruct its entrance, or lie like broken pews, unfit for use, yet occupying room. Every Christian should remember that the Church, as a whole, is composed of individuals ; individuals compose its primitive elements, as certainly as do particles compose the earth, or drops the ocean. Now, every one of the self-neutralized elements can scarcely be compared to anything else than those branches of the true vine, which, from bearing no fruit, were to be cast forth to be withered and burned. It is not the much or little that individual Christians can do, that is to be at all taken into the account, in the consideration of this question of individual responsibility. It is simply this : Does the Christian *do what he can* for the upbuilding of the Church and the conversion of the world ? It is the ability of the Christian to do, and not the quantity of what he does, by which he is to be judged. The widow's mite, or a cup of cold water given to a disciple, may, under certain circumstances, rise into a sublimer virtue before God, than the offering of a man who should endow a college

with a quarter of a million, to be a fountain of usefulness to flow on to the judgment. Let no Christian, then, be deterred from the most active efforts in the walks of piety, because of his supposed inability. In the language of a great general, in reply to a compliment bestowed upon him, for having obtained a most hazardous victory: "Sir, we did what we could." This is all our heavenly Father expects of us; and all who do what they can, occupy the same platform of honor in the estimation of our unerring Judge.

At the same time he so ordains, that an attempt to improve the one talent, will duplicate it. Christians who try to do something for the Lord, will not long try unsuccessfully. In the language of a successful London merchant: "My capital, when I commenced in business, consisted of shillings. I began at once to give a portion of the proceeds, in the form of pennies, to the Lord. My business capital soon increased to pounds; and from pence I gave shillings, and from shillings guineas." This law of growth in ability to do good, *by doing good*, applies as well to matters of mind as to matters of money; while the heart that is perpetually set on good deeds, is being led into the green pastures, and

by the still waters of eternal love and tranquillity. Every brother, we apprehend, who feels toward the Church he would nurse and vivify, as a mother toward her first-born, will be glad to find these help-hints to the creation of revival power.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## VARIETY OF MINISTERIAL TALENT.

FOR the want of remembering the import of our caption, false estimates are often made of ministerial talent. Many are prone to set up one standard for all. Every preacher must come to their particular measure, or he is second-rate. With some, the prestige of a great education, with the name belled with literary titles, becomes a charity that covereth a multitude of sins. With another, these very qualifications excite suspicion. The college-bred man is necessarily dull, arid, and dry, a conclusion, by the way, as untrue as it is unphilosophical, there being as few dry preachers among the educated, as a class, as among the non-educated. With another, the reasoner—the dealer in syllogisms—is the preacher of his fancy; while, with another, the man is mere mediocre unless he can deal in flights of fancy, flowers of rhetoric, and gorgeous and original creations of the imagination. With another, (and he is the representative of a very

large class,) the preacher is always perfection, no matter how prosy, diffuse, and superficial his thoughts, if he be but only able to burn himself out of the brush at last; in other words, if some fifteen or twenty minutes of the conclusion of his sermon be employed in the highly impassioned. With another, the eccentric man is the model of pulpit excellence; he abounds in flashes of wit, quaint sayings, facetious anecdotes, etc., etc. I am for the learned preacher, says one; I am afraid of the man who preaches from his learning, says another; I am for the man who makes me think, says another; I, for him who makes me cry, says another; and I for him who makes me laugh; and thus it is, some are for Paul, and some for Apollos, while Christ may be forgotten in the contest. Now, the truth is, that he who would correctly estimate ministerial talent and qualification, would place a high estimate upon all that diversity of talent just represented in the classes of ministers referred to. No invidious distinction should be drawn. No extolling of one above measure, and the depreciation of the rest. All are necessary. "There are a diversity of gifts." Were there but one gift for the pulpit, and that gift the most brilliant, men would soon become disgusted with it by

reason of its monotony. Variety is a necessity of the human mind. We should be careful, then, in speaking of ministers, by what rule we estimate their gifts. We may do them great injustice, and ourselves also. For the man who cannot go and hear the preacher that happens not to be a special favorite, or the brother who cannot engage heartily in his pastor's support, unless he happen to be of the class of preachers for which he has taken a particular fancy, are both alike guilty of folly. To expect all men to preach alike, would be to require that all men be constituted alike. This is no more true to the great law of Providence in the case, than it would be to require that the trees of the wood should all be of the same species. What if all forests were composed of the sugar maple? Well, mankind might have a sweet time, especially about sugar-making season; but they would, undoubtedly, soon feel that it would be much better to do with less sugar, and have a little oak and ash among their ligneous possessions. "There are a diversity of gifts." Ministerial merit, also, should be estimated in the light of its fruits. It often happens that the very men upon whose talents we place the lowest estimate, are the most highly honored of

God in the conversion of souls and the work of building up his Church. By their fruits we should judge them. But even in this there is great danger of mistake. It is not always the brother whose fruits are among the most showy kind who is to be ranked foremost among the apostles. There is such a thing as "preparing the way of the Lord," while another, again, may herald him, and in so doing meet him. There is such a thing as one preacher taking care of the "stuff" that another may have collected. It is not always the preacher that we hear the most about who is actually doing most for God. There is a talent that works in silence, like the law that crystallizes the gem in its undiscovered hiding-place. There are others, again, who, like a summer rain, seldom come without bringing thunder and lightning with them. Both are necessary. "There are a diversity of gifts."

But, after all, there is one fact about the preacher and preaching, which may be mentioned almost as a universally attractive quality, a quality, we mean, on which human nature everywhere will place about the same estimate. To this quality we give the single title of *earnestness*. This word we would make generic

of strong sympathy with an audience, self-forgetfulness and absorption in a subject. Such a speaker will speak to men true to nature, whatever be his degree of education ; and if his gifts be even but ordinary, men will flock to listen to his stirring mission. He makes them *feel*, and this is the true test of oratory. The soul of eloquence is feeling, and eloquence can never have a substitute. Such a speaker, if he be evidently called of God, need fear no competition, no opposition. Such a speaker is the product of no system of education. Like the spirit within the wheels in the prophet's vision, his masterly powers are born with him. The happy constitutionality that makes a highly earnest preacher, like the powers of the poet, must be born with him. Education may modify and chasten it, but so far from chilling, it will become fuel to the fire. The absence of much education will not always prevent it from putting forth its great power. The preacher whom education alone can make is seldom worth having after he is made. The preacher whom education can spoil had not much about him to spoil. The preacher who claims to be the better off because he never had educational advantages, is either a fanatic, or else he has obtained that

very education in the absence of these advantages. May God, in his mercy, give to the Church, not a Paul, not an Apollos, not a Bonanerges, not a Peter, not a John alone, but a mighty host of all the classes represented by these revered names. The Church needs a diversity of gifts. But he who cannot, in some goodly degree, manifest, from constitutional sympathy, some of the earnestness or unction above named, will always find his clerical career a dull and cool one, however qualified or gifted in other respects. But the object of this chapter, more especially, is to rebuke that captiousness in our membership that underrates the minister who happens not to be conformed to their model. In the promotion of revivals this will be found of the first moment, especially when the mania seizes the Church of sending for some favorite revivalist, a policy which generally results as in the instance of John eating the little book; the bitter is very apt to follow the sweet.

## CHAPTER XX.

## THE PAST AND PRESENT—A CHARACTER.

“SAY not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.” This scripture teaches that there may be an erroneous retrospect, and deprecates it. A wise review of the past is, indeed, rare. To come to a correct judgment concerning it, the laws of the human mind must be well studied. We are often deceived for the want of self-knowledge. For example: the remembrance of pleasure is always fresher in the mind than the remembrance of pain. A hasty conclusion on this subject would, certainly, be contrary to the truth. The principle is announced by our Saviour, in his allusions to a mother’s solicitude in the hour of her extremity, which, when over, “she remembereth no more the anguish for joy.” For the want of due attention to this principle, there are many who exalt the merit of the past over the present, and say that the “former days were better than

these." With them, the preachers of the present are pygmies, compared with those of the past; and the piety of the present is so diluted with pride and formalism that "there is none that doeth good; no, not one." Our churches, with steeples, are not as sacred as the former cabins of logs, which they have superseded; and cushioned pews are much harder than rude benches. Our class-meetings have all died out; our prayer-meetings will soon call for obituary notices; the Church is getting proud; the world waxing worse than ever; and it is as if Satan's chain had been loosed for a little season. "Why, we used to know every Methodist man by his dress, every Methodist woman by her bonnet, and the despised Methodists had come out from among the world. They were not of it, and were not, as now, like it. They then understood this scripture, 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate.' We got happy at every meeting. The Church was in a state of continual revival. Sinners were flocking to it by scores and hundreds, like doves to the windows. O, those were joyful days! We don't have such times nowadays; and it must be that the Church is backslidden." Here our croaking narrator heaved a sigh, and, suiting the action to

the word, he pointed toward the place where he attended meeting with a long, lank finger, compressed his thin lips over a large mouth, and threw himself forward, shrugging his shoulders as if he felt chilled to the heart with the Church's moral apostasy. After a groan or two, he resumed: "The extravagance of our preachers and their families, why, don't you think, it never used to cost us more than a quarter of a dollar for quarterage, and now they want me to pay five dollars a year for the support of the Gospel, and throw in something at a public collection every Sunday besides. Well, I wish I had died before *old-fashioned Methodism* was done away with;" and here he put his hand in his pocket, and we left our brother to his censorious cogitations and went on our way, indulging a few thoughts. This brother has wholly overlooked the thousand and one little drawbacks upon that millennium of his fancy, in the past, his belief in which wholly unfits him for the present. If preachers preached so much better and abler then than now, the proof is wanting. If human nature in those days would have, or did always guard against an apostolic altercation, and keep a Judas out of the college of the evangelists, then was it holier than inspi-

ration ever made it. If there was no pride taken even in plainness, no glorying in the evidences of one's humility in those palmy days of primitive simplicity, then the Methodism of thirty years ago, devoted and exalted as it was, has fallen very fast. If the rude conveniences for worship were more promotive of piety than the more tasty provisions of the present, then penance is a virtue. If strife among brethren, neighborhood tattle, Church trials, insubordination, secession, hypocrisy, and Phariseeism, were never found to infest the Church in those palmy days, when Sabbath schools were nearly unknown, when our people had not the books and newspapers to read they have now—had not the material for their thought, nor the same motives to be diligent in business—then history has slandered them, and human nature, under the rule of "Young America," seems to have become something other than what it was. And as to the little then required to support the Gospel and our institutions, five dollars can now be as easily raised as the twentieth part of it then. And as to the sweeping assertion of the Church's apostasy, is not God the same, Christ the same, the Gospel the same? Have not faith and prayer the same prevailing power? and do we not resort to

the same sources and employ the same means? and is not the same end present? Most certainly. But our brother's erroneous retrospect is working a mighty mischief in his moral sentiments. He judges not wisely of the past, and hence he is unprepared to appreciate the present. Have our readers ever met with this character?

Our brother in the work of promoting revivals will, we fear, often meet with this character, much to his annoyance. We here send him a daguerreotype likeness, that he may find no difficulty in identifying him.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### PASTORAL VISITING.

THE FOOLISH PHYSICIAN AND PREACHER CONTRASTED—HOW POWER  
MAY BE COLLECTED FOR THE PULPIT — JOHN B. GOUGH — THE  
PEOPLE TO BE SEEN AT THEIR HOMES — A GOOD PASTOR SELDOM  
IMPUTED AN INFERIOR PREACHER — THE PREACHER WHO CANNOT  
VISIT — ANECDOTE OF THE CRIMEA — THE MODEL TEACHER A  
MODEL PASTOR — HEARTS ARE TO BE READ AS WELL AS BOOKS.

WHAT would be thought of the physician, who was wont to prescribe for his patients without acquainting himself with their symptoms, prescribe upon the principles of physiology common to all? Whatever his skill, would he not lose both patients and practice? Now, the pastor, whose business it is to raise up a spiritual flock, who neglects personal intercourse with them for religious purposes, who neglects to look into their spiritual symptoms, their individualisms, and idiosyncrasies of experience, acts in spiritual matters precisely as this physician in medicinal. Pastoral visitation is an essential of success. The pulpit will always be found borrowing from it its principal power. The most effective discourses are those in which the speaker seems

best acquainted with the thoughts and experiences of the hearers. He seems to thread those thoughts, to be familiar with the hearers' private emotions, secret temptations, and little or great solicitudes. He is full also of anecdote and illustration, taken fresh from the life of the hour. Such a preacher everybody will hear gladly. This power of secretly learning from the people what they need to be told, is not peculiar to the pulpit. The popular lecturer resorts to these resources for his thunder. A Gough, Brown, and others, will be found collecting through the day by observance and intercourse, the principal, and, probably, the most interesting material of their lectures for the evening. The most important part of a preacher's study, is to study his people. His books are walking books. Far the largest portion of his library will speak out to him, and that voice in the power which it may impart to him may be as the voice from heaven which John heard. Intercourse with individuals of his flock never fails to endear them to him. The preacher is not presumed to be a common friend. The sacredness of his office encourages familiarity when he has once made the first advances as their spiritual adviser and sympathizer, and thus it is that such friendship ripens into confidence

and intimacy. O! what a multitude of defects in the pulpit exhibitions of such a preacher will such a relation to his flock cover. Hence it is, that the preacher who visits is never found an unpopular, and seldom an unsuccessful preacher. These visits should be made to the houses of the people; "from house to house," are the words of Paul's journal in his pastoration. The farmer can indeed be seen in his field, the shoemaker on his bench, the mechanic at his plane, and the merchant at his desk, and it is all well, but not well enough. Would the pastor occupy a vantage-ground of power? Let him seek the hearth-side and the cradle-side; let him be seen among the children, no matter how lowly that home. Circumscribed as were the fishermen's huts of Galilee, that so often sheltered Christ, squalid and repulsive from nameless circumstances, it may be, yet in this act, like the symbolic horn in Habakkuk's vision, is the hiding of his power. His call will be appreciated, perhaps, as a condescension. His anxious inquiries about the welfare of the family, temporal as well as spiritual, will win their hearts. The lonely mother, whose every hour of life is engrossed with the care of a swelling group of children, and who has to battle hard and long with intruding want,

feels that a friend has come, and the balm of a sympathizing heart strengthens her afresh for her task and her trials. The young husband and father on whom the fortunes of life have not yet smiled very propitiously, and around whose soul the murky cloud of despondence has at times essayed to unfold itself, feels at once, here is a good man that careth for me. How like tow before the fire is opposition to such moral power, a power given to the pastor. O, fearful responsibility! If the persons thus visited are Church members, it often becomes a new hegira in their spiritual history. If not members, they are secured as respecters and hearers. Nor are the pastor's visits less appropriate, though at times, perhaps, less powerful in their effects at the homes of the more fortunate and the rich. Every man feels that when you seek him at his own home to do him good, you have taken a step so bold that it becomes him to believe you in earnest. The law of hospitality diffuses the atmosphere of courtesy about the interview, and the mutual restraint under which both are placed, prepares the way for appropriate caution and reciprocal kindness. Under such circumstances, the warnings of the Gospel and the lessons of piety, delivered in none of the cant of the sect,

in no spirit of obtrusiveness or assumption, and yet, so delivered as not to be edgeless, are often like the fatal arrow sent at a venture which smote the King of Israel between the joints of the harness. In all our experience, we have found that a good pastor was seldom reported an inferior preacher, while, other things being equal, his success in revival effort always distanced immeasurably the man who did not visit.

But some will say, I cannot visit, I have no taste nor tact for it. Now, such preachers are a good deal like the nobleman's son, who procured a commission and went to the Crimea. When there, upon the first whistle of a bomb-shell, he was found by his superior officer, when he should have been deploying his company, trembling like an aspen leaf behind an embankment. In reply to questions asked him, he stated, that he had no taste whatever for such business, when the opinion becoming mutual, he was ordered to be drummed out of the army as a coward, and sent home to his father as one out of his place. Now, the preacher who has no taste for visiting is sadly out of his place. Had he accompanied the Saviour while on earth, his tastes would certainly have been subjected to many severe tests, for the

Saviour's public ministry was more than two thirds made up of personal intercourse and conversation with those about him, while the asylums of wretchedness, the rendezvous of want and poverty, were his most common places of resort. Sleeping to-night in the house of Peter, to-morrow night in that of Lazarus of Bethany, and spending the next in the mountains for prayer, are specimens of his itinerant pastoration. He began with the lower strata of society, and commenced to work up. The poor had the Gospel preached to them, and common people heard him gladly. How wise this philosophy that commenced its mission to the poor and to the common people. It is among them, that if reforms be not the most needed, all permanent reforms must begin. Pampered conservatism never does anything for the world. Those who are up in the world seldom care how the rest of it goes. We are not, then, to look among the high places of wealth and power for movements in favor of humanity. Earthquakes do not commence on the tops of mountains. There is no shaking of the heavens and the earth, in which the foundations are not first moved. It is the common people whose respect, sympathies, love, and confidence, the pastor should first seek.

And he who shuns the lowest spectacle of human wretchedness, who shuns annoying ignorance, who turns away from the low hovel of poverty, looks in, but scarcely deigns to enter the house of competence; but seeks ease with book in hand upon the sofa of palatial riches, might better study, *de novo*, the minister's great model, or else remember the example of the nobleman's son, as appropriate to himself.

But, says another, how can I visit and study too? In the first place, the lessons of the human heart, the phase of human condition you learn in visiting, constitute, as above intimated, an essential part of your studies, and with a proper husbandry of time, you can read books enough as well as to read hearts. If you have been so unfortunate as to enter the ministry prematurely, as to be destitute of an elementary knowledge of your profession, as we regret to say many have, you must contend with this difficulty as best you can. But it will not lessen it a whit to closet yourself in your library and forbear intercourse with the people. If the great poet of nature could find

"Books in running brooks,  
Tongues in trees, sermons in stones,  
And good in everything,"

he must be a dull learner who cannot glean something through the week from the flashes of an anxious eye, from the throbbing of a hopeful or a sorrowful heart, from the tale of misfortune, the story of bereavement and buried love, which he may learn by intercourse with his flock, and which, mingled with the lessons of duty, of piety, or of Gospel promises, shall not infuse grace into his lips for the Sabbath, and make his words like the refreshing odors of the old sanctuary. As with the eyes of the fabled Argus, the pastor should scan the appearance of his flock, and seek at the earliest possible convenience, a personal acquaintance with each. What means that Scripture, where the shepherd who had a hundred sheep lost one of them? The ninety and nine were temporarily abandoned, and the straying member of the flock sought until it was found, borne home in triumph upon the shoulder, and thus the number kept good. The preacher who works for a revival and neglects the pastoral work, is a workman that needeth to be ashamed.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## PASTORAL VISITING.

PASTORAL AND SOCIAL VISITING — THE PASTOR THE COMMON PROPERTY OF ALL — BEING INSTANT IN SEASON — THE SICK ROOM — EMERGENCES — DEATH IN A FAMILY — FUNERAL SERMONS — DUE REFERENCE TO BE HAD TO THE CUSTOMS OF SOCIETY.

WE would distinguish between *pastoral* and *social* visiting. Nor do we see any necessity why the pastor should forego the usual pleasures and proprieties of the social circle. We would not be fastidious here. Our Saviour performed his first miracle at a festive and highly social occasion. But while the Saviour thus revealed his true character amid, perhaps, the exuberance of hilarity, if not mirth, so a minister on any social occasion where he may chance to be a guest, should never lose sight of his true character; and on all social occasions in which a minister may appropriately engage, the circle should never be broken up without proposing prayer. Nor would we deprive the minister's family of the privilege of choosing their own associates with

becoming propriety, just because it becomes the head of that family to become all things to all men. The law of caste, to a greater or a less degree, obtains in all conditions of society ; and as it respects intimate social intercourse, not always without propriety. But the preacher, as a pastor, belongs to no caste or class ; he is neither an aristocrat nor a democrat. The most refined and the most elevated in society will only esteem him the more highly by knowing that his earliest attentions are given to those in the lowliest walks of life. If they estimate his character properly, they will expect to find him the most frequently where his services are the most needed. He is governed by none of those distinctions in society that are so wont to obtain. He is equally the honored guest of education, opulence, and power ; though yesterday, like Doctor Clarke, he dined on potatoes in a mud hut with one of his delighted parishioners. Here is he furnished with a peculiar and unconfined power of usefulness.

Nor do we mean, by pastoral visiting, those hasty professional calls made by some, and which pass under that name. We have known some preachers whose object seemed to be to see how many families they could call upon in the shortest given time possible. One young brother

boasted to us once that he had made ten pastoral visits in an hour, and prayed in every house. We have no confidence in such a course. Such visits are mere official and dead, wanting in the living freshness of a sympathetic heart, and can do but little good. Nothing is more inappropriate or rude than an undue haste in the discharge of so holy a duty. But it may be objected that great haste is necessary, or but few families can be visited. The answer to this objection is, attach the importance to the work which it demands, commence in time. Visit a few families daily, and you will soon have the privilege of saying of your flock, "My sheep know my voice."

Most especially should the pastor avail himself of special occasions to be present in the families of his parishioners. Has some misfortune befallen one of them? Let him be the first to tender condolence and sympathy, and suitable lessons of submission. Sickness, it may be, with her wan countenance, her sunken, sallow eye, her skeleton frame, her nights of restlessness and painful vigils, her bitter herbs and pungent agonies, may have become the dread inmate of a family. Its head, perhaps, may be slowly sinking into the grave, or some favorite son, to

whom health seemed almost guaranteed, may have been suddenly smitten down by a dire ailment; or a lovely daughter, the pride and hope of the family, may have become a victim of that slow, but certain slaughterer of worth and beauty, the consumption. Here is a household of heavy hearts, a house whose rooms are dark at noon, and, over whose threshold the foot learns to fall with lightened tread. Here a fond mother strives to suppress her grief by the side of pain and pining love, but hastens away to her closet to weep and to pray. Now right here it is that the preacher should hear the voice once spoken to the Saviour, "Behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." And, like that precious Saviour, he should hasten in due time to mingle the tears of his sympathy with grief and bereavement. It was over a scene of sickness and death that it is recorded of Jesus, "He wept." Good seed may be sown here with a most sanguine hope of a fruitful harvest. There is nothing like the loss of health to make one feel the worthlessness of the world. Men will look up when drowning. There is no cordial to the sick like that of the frequent attention of a beloved friend. In this dark day his heart is to be won, and the preacher who cares both for my soul and body, who,

Christ-like, is touched with the feelings of my infirmities, will exert over me an omnipotent power. How easily and appropriately, too, can that pastor, when acquainted with the wants of that sick family, bring their cases before God in his prayers in the pulpit, and thus bend the whole social heavens of the neighborhood in sympathy over them. What effect will such attentions have upon a wayward son of that family? Long will the remembrance of it linger like the fragrance of grace in the memories of the survivors of that family after the pastor is gone. If visiting the sick is written by inspiration as a fruit of pure and undefiled religion on the part of Christians in common, what is to be thought of the pastor who would not make a special exertion to pray by the bedside of the sick, and to be ranked among the most active sympathizers? It may sometimes happen that bread literally, as well as bread spiritually, is needed at the house of the sick. Few can make these delicate discoveries better than the faithful pastor; and if it be not in his immediate power to supply the want, he possesses special ability to influence the action of others. It is scarcely less necessary at times to win souls to Christ by loaves and fishes than by expostulations and pray-

ers. The two must often go together. As taught in our Discipline, and indicated in our love-feasts, the Church should take care of her poor; and pastoral visitation is essential to the discharge of this duty. Let the preacher, then, who would slowly but surely accumulate a revival force in his flock; who would combine all those elements of force into one glorious whole, and win a victory to his Lord, study well the momentous duty of pastoral visiting; study it in its principles and in its details; study well when and how these visits will be made the most effectual, remembering that man's extremity is God's opportunity.

A death in a family is a voice from eternity. There is no grief so utterly annihilating as that of funeral grief. By the side of the grave of buried love, one feels as he can feel nowhere else how like a frail bubble upon the billow are the fairest of human hopes. The hardest heart becomes as water when taking the last look at the coffin at the bottom of the grave, and listening to those leaden sounds which arise on the ear when the first clods of the valley drop upon mortality's narrow house. It is said of afflictions, that they are to us as the darkness of the night, and that we would see no stars, and be

ignorant of the majesty and magnificence of the heavens over us, but for such darkness. It is from out of the gloom of funeral sadness, that the most thoughtless can be induced to look up. Amid such emergences, then, let the pastor be present to point to the Star of Bethlehem. We have viewed with grief and surprise, a growing indifference among some of our ministers to preaching at funerals. This is owing, in part, to a want of a due appreciation of the golden opportunities which they furnish to the pastor, and, in part, to an abuse of the institution. He who feels it his duty to preach an elaborate discourse of seventy minutes' length on every funeral occasion, is sadly wanting in a sense of the appropriate, and with such a preacher, preaching at funerals will soon become irksome. Not so, we trust, with him who can always speak on such occasions, from fifteen to thirty minutes, and speak such thoughts as the inspiration of the occasion naturally suggests, and to a reflecting mind, will suggest in almost infinite variety.

In pastoral visiting, we would not have the preacher overlook, or treat with recklessness, the customs and proprieties of life. It may not be equally proper for him to call upon the family at all hours of the day, and it may so happen

that he may call at times when he finds the family not in a fitting condition to receive him. The family may have been thrown into some confusion or hurry. Some of its members may be just on the eve of leaving, and it may be within a few minutes of car time, etc., etc. In such cases, let him not be obtrusive. Let him greatly modify his mission, or wave it altogether. Good sense, good taste, good manners, and deep piety, are the leading characteristics of a good pastor.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### EXCITEMENT.

METHODISTS NOT ALARMED — EXCITEMENT FEARED BECAUSE IT CONFLICTS WITH A CREED — SELDOM SUCCESSFULLY GUARDED AGAINST — DEFINITION OF METHODISM — EXTRAVAGANCES DEPRESSED — EXCITEMENT ANALYZED — FOUR CARDINAL SOURCES OF EMOTION — RELIGIOUS EXCITEMENT ALWAYS WHOLESOME.

MUCH is said about the danger of undue excitement in revivals of religion. With some, it is feared as the sin of witchcraft. As Methodists, we have never been as fearful and unbelieving on this subject as some of our neighbors. We have always believed that excitement is essential to revivals, and have not, from our experience, been induced to be so very apprehensive as to its consequences. The case might be very different, were we like many of our neighbors, embarrassed by our creed in the case. If we believed that no one was converted, only the "elect," and that when it pleased God, in his eternal sovereignty, to touch a heart by his Spirit, that a work was commenced, which would continue by an absolute certainty, and

that all others, who might give similar evidence of a disposition to fly from the wrath to come, if they apostatized, never had anything to apostatize from—we say, if we labored under this embarrassing creed, we should be very wary of excitement, and rather than to have the kingdom of heaven taken by violence, we would, like our brethren alluded to, desire to have it taken possession of in silence; for it is really not a little embarrassing to those who hold to the creed, once in grace, always in grace, to witness publicly a number of conversions, and to witness these persons for a considerable length of time, giving precisely the same evidence of their conversion, exhibiting precisely the same spiritual phenomena, and yet, when a portion of them shall fall back into the world, to tell the world that these persons never had any religion, and that all the evidence they gave of the fact was deceptive, that they were either self-deceived, or, as hypocrites, they were deceiving others. Such declarations are apt to cause reflecting men of the world to come to some strange conclusions. They are apt to say, how, then, do we know that anybody is converted? Our Calvinistic friends, however, who would guard against excitement in revivals as if it were an epilepsy,

have not been always able to do so. With nature and their creed at variance, the former has often triumphed, and revivals with sobs of distress, groans of anguish, and even shouts of joy, have richly favored their sanctuaries. Sometimes, the fearful and fastidious preacher has become alarmed, at other times angry, but much oftener has he melted under the Divine visitation, and flowed with the flood.

So far as it concerns the compactness, the emphasis, the out-spokenness, and the social warmth and adhesiveness of Methodism, it is no more than *regenerated human nature acting itself out naturally*. We put on it no Procrustean trammel to conform it to a creed, nor does our sense of the befitting—our views of etiquette—close its lips to the loud “roaring” of penitential sorrow, or exultant shouting, when pardon brings relief. We view religion as an exciting theme, as one of the most exciting in the universe; and to yield to men, without let or censure, the privilege of becoming exceedingly excited on minor topics of the day, and to contend for the absence of excitement on the all-momentous topics of religion, seems to us an absurdity. But it may be asked, whether extremes or extravagances have not occurred under such a system.

Well, in reply, we say, singular as it may seem, extremes and extravagances have occurred among our neighbors, just about as often, in proportion to the powerful revivals they have had, as among ourselves. They are probably, then, unavoidable, even with the exercise of the most prudent foresight. We honestly confess to their frequent existence, and have never seen a convulsed body under religious excitement, without more or less pain or apprehension. It has often turned out, however, much better than our fears, while the good that has resulted from revivals, even where these extravagances have been prominent, has so far exceeded the evil, that we have looked upon the latter, as spots on the sun. We would not, however, discourage the exercise of a prudent discipline here. There has, probably, been among us the workings of a superstitious fear. We have feared to curtail extravagances, lest we quench the Spirit.

But is there not something peculiar to great excitement in revivals, which, in its ultimate results, endangers greatly the interests of religion? We have never deemed, or seen anything peculiar about it. We think a rational analysis of the whole matter will allay all

rational fears. We know of but four cardinal sources of emotion in the human heart, namely: joy, sorrow, anger, appetite. Well, now, if there be so much danger, as some tell us, of inflaming the passions, in seasons of revival, and being carried away with a tempest of animal fervor, to which of these great arteries of feeling is the exciting appeal made? Certainly not to appetite, under which may be ranged epicureanism, lust, sensuality, etc., etc. Nor does it dangerously arouse, we think, the second great leopard of our nature. It does not make people hate one another. It does not instigate to wrath or prompt men to assault each other's persons. Anger and appetite, then, with all their numerous brood, are passions not excited in religious excitement. True, it does beget sorrow, profound sorrow, a "godly sorrow, that worketh repentance not to be repented of." This sorrow is a most healthy one. It arises from the discoveries which the sinner has made of himself. He is sorry for his sins, his depravity, and for having grieved so great grace. His sorrow may be very profound, and manifest itself in very high emotion.

But can there be anything *dangerous* in such a class of emotions? The rather, do they

not embody everything that is hopeful? A sorrow, too, that need not, under proper instruction, be of long continuance. It is a false view of the philosophy of conversion, to suppose that it must necessarily be preceded by a long season of legal agony. Christ has made an atonement for our sins, and he invites us to come immediately to him, and demands of us no sorrow by way of penance. It is to see our sins, our guilt, our danger, and to feel our need of him, believe, and he is our Saviour. The smitten sinner merges from the profoundest grief, into the sweetest joy known to human nature, "peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ," and possessing the hope of eternal glory. Now, in all this, is it at all surprising if tears, and sobs, and shouts, and sighs, groans, and exultations, should become the natural language of the occasion? But is there anything in all this class of emotions calculated to fill one with apprehension in view of the excitement which characterizes revivals? We think not.

But there is another large stream of emotions that flow here, whose fountain we have not traced. There can be no joy where there is not love, and with love to God, arises an increased love for our fellows, and especially for kinsmen

according to the flesh. The converted wife immediately feels a solicitude for her husband, too deep, it may be, for concealment. The converted child becomes at once a missionary to the parent. The converted sister is found at once praying and weeping for her wayward brother, and thus it is that all the loves of kindred are made to receive a powerful impulse. But is there anything to be apprehended from such an excitement as this, an excitement in which one dear relation is induced ardently to seek the best, highest, and holiest interest of another? Excitement in revivals! Yes, there is always excitement present, the best, most wholesome of all excitement. If we could have a revival on earth without excitement, we could do more than the angels in heaven, for they rejoice over every sinner that repenteth. And as if their views of the matter harmonized precisely with ours and our experience, their solicitudes for the time being would forget a whole Church, and concentrate upon one repenting, struggling sinner. "I say unto you, that joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance." O blessed revival excitement! that calls into vigorous activity none but the noblest emo-

tions of our nature, and while it thrills the Church on earth with gladness and rapture, it has such an affinity for the skies, such a congeniality for the atmosphere of the angels' home, that it adds to their joys also.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### HAVE FAITH IN REVIVALS.

REVIVALS SCRIPTURAL — THEIR SPIRIT FLOWS IN THE PRAYERS OF THE BIBLE, IN THE PROPHECIES OF THE BIBLE, IN THE PROMISES OF THE BIBLE, AND IN BIBLE HISTORY — SECULAR HISTORY OF REVIVALS — REVIVALS AND METHODISM — A SOLECISM.

THE word revival implies its beginning-place. It intimates the existence of some religion, and the means of its promotion. It intimates the existence of spiritual things, though they may be ready to die. It intimates that the revival must commence in the Church, and may exist even without resulting in the conversion of souls. The word is Scriptural. And yet there are those who look upon revivals as not a necessity, view them as a kind of abnormal condition. Such brethren do exceedingly err, and they will be seldom favored with revivals for their want of faith in them. We would, if it were possible in this chapter, say something that would increase the confidence of all in revivals, and that would induce Christians continually to work for them, to work out not merely their own salvation, but,

as it were, the salvation of the Church, and others. If we glance at the history of revivals, we will find them of Bible origin, and that they breathe in the *prayers* of the Church; that they murmur among the strings of the prophets' lyres, and make up a large portion of the burden of Bible promises. What means such praying as this? "Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease. Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee? Show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation." Again: "Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts; look down from heaven, and behold and visit this vine and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself." Again, hear the prophet Habakkuk: "O Lord, revive thy work. In the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy."

Now, let us consult the *prophets* of the Bible concerning revivals. If we talk with these holy men, they will tell us stories of revival transformation, and rise before us in revival transport. Here is a description from Joel, of Pentecost, eight hundred years before it occurred: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and

your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit."

With all this the *promises* of the Bible harmonize. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them: and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice, even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, The way of holiness ; the unclean shall not pass over it ; but it shall be for those : the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon ; it shall not be found there ; but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads : they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

The above glowing description of revival triumphs has, in all probability, been as yet but imperfectly realized. And from its teachings we may be justified in the inference that infinitely greater revivals are yet to occur in the Church before the millennium, than ever have yet occurred. We are encouraged, then, at the beginning of every revival, to expect great things. Brethren, let us have faith in revivals.

If we consult the Bible *historically*, we will find many striking instances of revival manifestation and reformation. Reference might be had to the reigns of David and Solomon, Asa and Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah. Look, also, at that great revival under Ezra, and then, again,

under John the Baptist. Then, again, at the revival at Pentecost, in which no less than three thousand the first day, and two the second, were converted to God. The holy fire then caught in Samaria, and upon the dispersion of the disciples, after the martyrdom of Stephen, revivals broke out in the remoter parts of Judea, extending as far as the territories of Greece. Indeed, the dawn of the Church's progress, as revealed in the Bible, seems to have been by means of revivals. Has it not been so ever since? No fact is more easy of demonstration. The Church has always progressed, as it were, by revival steps. Especially true is this of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Take away that part of her history which appertains to revivals, and you have about annihilated her history. Methodism moves forward by revivals with as stern a necessity, if not in as strict order, as doth the husbandman acquire his wealth by preparing for and then gathering his harvest in its season. Methodism without revivals! Methodist preachers who do not believe in revivals! Both are solecisms.

Were we to glance at the history of revivals since the great one under Luther, we would find that the pure faith of the Gospel caught in France, Denmark, Holland, Switzerland, the Low

Countries, the mountains of Scotland, and north of Ireland, and in Britain by the revival law. And such has continued to be the fact in these countries ever since. At an early day, in this country, under the ministrations of Whitefield, Coke, and Asbury, and their coadjutors; also, Brainerd, the Edwardses, Davies, and the Tennes, the Church was saved from all the icy horrors of formalism by means of revivals. And but for the revivals that have characterized the first half of the present century, where had been the evangelism of America? Could Methodism spare the moral wealth, the spiritual spoils, which she has gathered in revivals the last half century? Take them from her, and she would have nothing left. And when Methodism seeks not, by the most direct means, the promotion of revivals, when her attention shall be so directed to the externals of the Church, the mere scaffolding, as to forget these weightier matters of the law, then is Ichabod written upon her walls. Her glory is departed and given to another. Yes, we say, given to another. For Methodism in some form, and under some name, will continue to exist, if it be true that the millennium is to come.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### HOLINESS.

DISTINCTIONS AND DEFINITIONS — THE THING AND NOT THE MODE TO BE INVESTIGATED — AGREEMENT AS IT RESPECTS THE THING IN ESSENCE — DEFINITION GIVEN — TRUE STANDARD AROUND WHICH WE CAN HARMONIZE — QUESTIONS WHICH LIE BEYOND PROFITABLE INVESTIGATION — THE THEORISTS — SPECIAL MEETINGS TO SEEK FOR CHRISTIAN HOLINESS — THE GRAND PECULIARITY — ADVANCING FROM THE "HOPE SO" TO THE "KNOW SO" — HOLINESS UNDER THE DIFFERENT DISPENSATIONS — HOLINESS THE BIBLE'S LAST DEMAND UPON THE WORLD.

THE words holiness, sanctification, perfection, etc., are used in Scripture in various shades of meaning. With Methodists we believe they mean a death *to* sin; the death of *indwelling* sin; a resurrection *to* righteousness, accompanied with a consciousness of loving God with all the heart. Certain distinctions, however, have been set up, occasioning among us much dispute, such as the difference between regeneration and sanctification, where and when the latter begins, and what is implied in its completion. These and other distinctions have led to as many definitions as definers, and it is seldom that two writ-

ers agree on the subject of Christian holiness, where the *mode* of the thing's progress, rather than the thing itself, has been the subject of discussion. Disputers have waxed warm, and even parties and sectional organizations have been temporarily created. Perhaps all will agree with us, that very little has been done by these discussions to harmonize the views of the Church, while, in some instances, the Christian's spirituality has been endangered. May it not be possible that we exceedingly err in attempting to map out the process by which the justified sinner is advanced from incipient grace to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord? Not more than a millionth part of what is to be known of the mysterious laws of electricity is yet, perhaps, known. Animal and vegetable chemistry, the science of crystallization, are all yet unexplored Africas in human thought. Why should we be so ready, then, to trace the way of the Eternal Spirit in its contact with our own souls, about which we have no knowledge whatever, beyond a consciousness of being? Like little headlands far off in the ocean, that lift their rocky or sandy summits just above the surface, we know they are there, but what mysterious line of submarine Alps they may indicate, we may never know.

until "there shall be no more sea." Like these marine phenomena, we say, are some passages of holy writ. God breathed into the nostrils of Adam, and he became a living soul. Now here is a fact stated, but, like the little island summit of the ocean, it is surrounded by mystery which none may explain. The process of Omnipotence in the production of animal life, is as easily a thing of analysis, as the process of the Spirit in creating in man the newness of the spiritual life. Does not the Saviour place an embargo upon inquiries in this direction? "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." "Who by searching can find out God?" "These things are too high for me, I cannot attain unto them." Is it not so dogmatic, so incapable of a demonstration to which all will agree, to attempt to show just how much or how little the Holy Spirit has done for our depravity, at this or that successive step in our spiritual history, that the work must ever be an unprofitable one? Rather let us speak of the *thing*, and abandon disputation on the *mode*. Who ever knew a sharp controversialist on the subject of the mode of Christian holiness, that did

not give evidence, before he got through, that he wrote far less from experience than from theory?

But is there no way to define this blessed grace, so that Christians may have an entity to think of, and not be bewildered by those floating, contradictory definitions that have but too often entered into the writings and teachings of individuals of the Church? There is, thank God. As Methodists, we all agree as to what the grace is in essence. "*It is to love God with all thy heart, mind, and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself.*" Here is Christian holiness, sanctification, perfection. Show us a man whose heart habitually glows with emotions so heavenly, and we care not to ask him how, or when, or where he received the blessing. In minuteness of detail he may not know himself. In our view, we have no idea that Christians generally do, and yet may they be as conscious of this blessing, as of any other feeling apprehensible by consciousness. Here, then, is a definition of the Saviour. Let us harmonize around it. Let us view it as an ultimate truth, as the ultimatum of our knowledge in the matter. Theories and speculations aside, let us seek to know that God is supremely loved, and then are we supremely blessed.

If we lose sight of the polar star above named, we will find ourselves perpetually involved in questions that only bewilder, and which multiply words without knowledge. May not questions underlie this subject equally profound with many which might be mentioned, the solution of which, good men are willing to wait the dawn of eternity's light? The mystery of the origin of evil, for example. How the immense deluge of moral and physical suffering that surges so indiscriminately in the world, can be harmonized with an all-presiding benevolence; how Providence can support a kingdom of order in the world, and bring about every event according to the foreknowledge and counsels of his will, and yet man be absolutely free; how pre-science can be reconciled with human freedom, are all questions which seem to lie beyond the limits of successful investigation. He who is perpetually puzzling himself about them, to the neglect of the weightier matters of the law, resembles the old Jews, who wandered in the deserts of Arabia with a sunny Canaan, with golden fruit inviting their possession, just at hand. Do not treat the subject of holiness metaphysically. Do not theorize until you become transcendental. Do not establish a train of notions of your

own, and defend them until the spirit of bigotry, if not Phariseeism, takes possession of your soul, and you subject yourself to the oft-heard censure, that those who talk most about Christian holiness, seem to be most wanting in the possession of the spirit of it. There are limits to human knowledge, and the circle with the most knowing is very limited.

Revival preaching should insist on Christian holiness. It should set up the standard we have named. It should insist upon the definition of Jesus. It should neither ask nor want any better. Its vocabulary should be Scriptural. Away here with human inventions ; such words and phrases as "entire consecration," seeking the "second blessing," etc., etc. We have been often asked our views in reference to the propriety of holding meetings specially for Christian holiness. They may not have been without their use. In our view, however, they are generally of doubtful propriety. We should seek to promote Christian holiness at every meeting. Besides, there is a kind of solecism of language here. A meeting to seek for Christian holiness cannot, when justly analyzed, be any other than a meeting in which Christians are seeking more religion, for Christian holiness is the sum of all religion,

generic of the whole thing. But as this definition would give such a meeting no marked character, it will generally be found that those circles of brethren who hold such meetings, have some particular theory to support. They are in possession of some new view upon this subject, in contradistinction to their brethren. They reduce the subject of Christian holiness, which is generic to something which is specific. They proceed in the wrong direction. In the place of advancing from species to genera, they proceed from genera to species. The results are seldom satisfactory. Besides, why not hold special meetings for an increase of faith, humility, etc.?

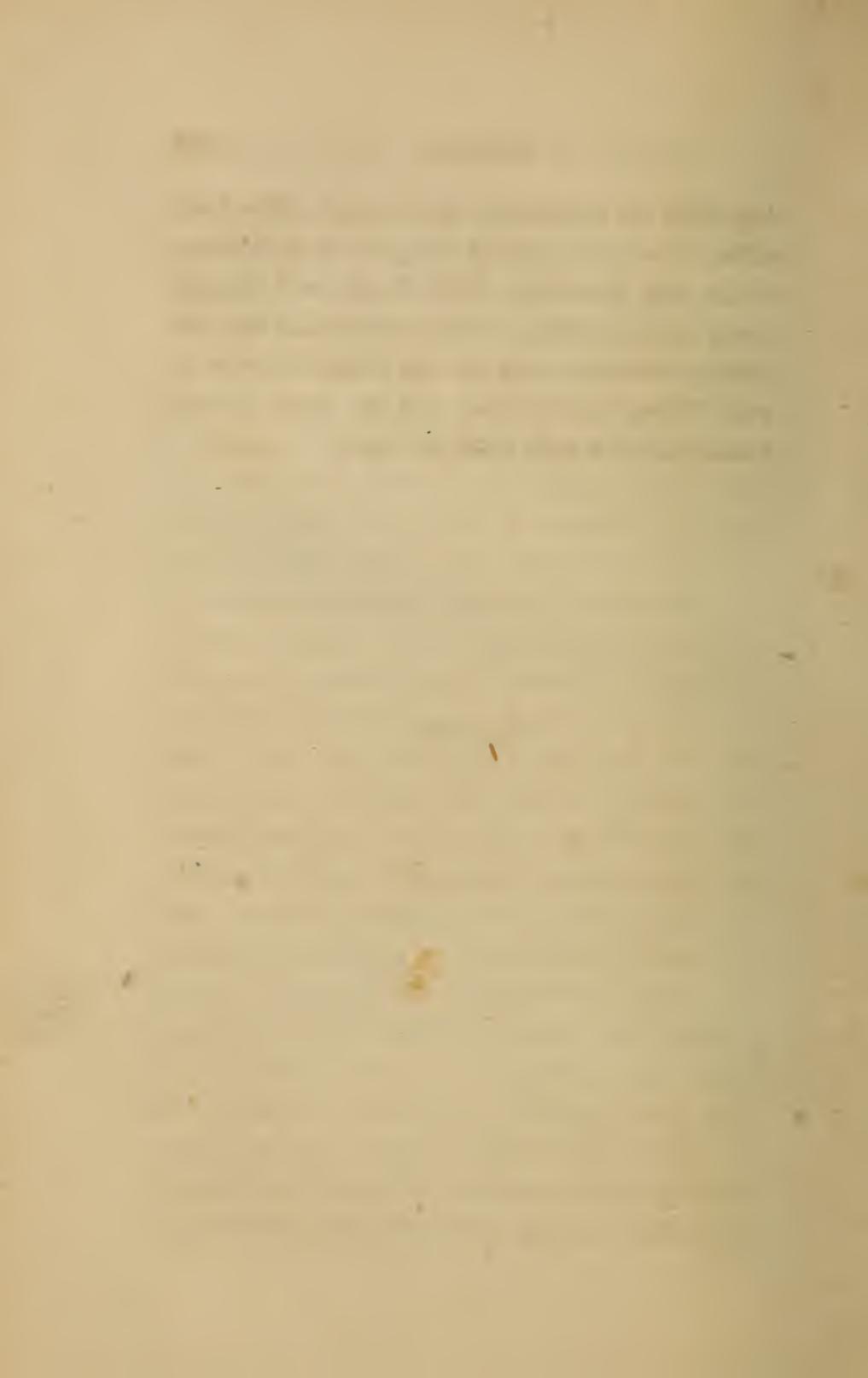
We offer the above remarks on this delicate subject, with the profoundest deference to the judgments and more extended experiences of our brethren. While we are opposed to singleizing or technicalizing this blessed doctrine among us, after some of the *modes* above hinted at, we nevertheless believe in giving it marked prominence in all our worship and religious teachings. If the doctrine be not peculiar to Methodists, we have always held it peculiarly. In theory, our neighbors may believe in the possibility of loving God with all the heart, but, in bondage to

their creeds, they will not assume to confess it. With them conversions are “hopeful.” They “hope that they have obtained a hope.” They hope that God is supreme in their affections, but will not trust to the evidence of consciousness and good works, to advance them to any further belief, to the perfect freedom of the sons of God. Methodists have advanced here from the *hope so* to the *know so*. Here is our grand peculiarity, and it should be ever held up before our people. Holiness, this has always been our watchword ; to spread it over all lands, our object. In this, we do no more than act Scripturally. If we look into the old dispensation, we will find holiness, or moral purity, among the first inculcations of God. A hundred physical objects that met the Jewish eye almost daily, had a tongue to speak to him of holiness. The furniture of the tabernacle, and the vessels of the sanctuary, were eloquent with the theme. Prophecy speaks of its diffusion, and points to that period in its triumphs when “holiness to the Lord” would be stamped upon the bells of the herd. The Son of man came down from heaven, and among the first words of his mission were, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” The great apostle to the Gentiles

takes up the blessed burden, and sends it reverberating along the centuries. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And at the closing up of revelation, the sealing up of the days of vision, a door is opened in heaven. The jasper-walled and golden-streeted Jerusalem is revealed, the metropolis of the saints; and the closing words of the Bible are uttered down to the world from its entrance gates: "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth." Holiness! it is the ark of the Lord among our doctrinal ideas. It is not the shibboleth of a sect, the dogma of a denomination, but it is "Christ in us the hope of glory." It is the very essence of our spiritual life, the vital artery of our whole system. It is the central sun around which the satellites all revolve in harmony, rejoicing in its broad, warm, genial, life-imparting smile. O, for holiness individually in the membership! O, for a holy ministry! Together, they make an omnipotent Church. "Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and noth-

ing shall be impossible unto you." We have often known revivals of religion to commence under the preaching of holiness, and though there are a diversity of operations, and the officiating minister must be the judge of what is most fitting in the case, yet we have always considered it a safe place to begin.

THE END.













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